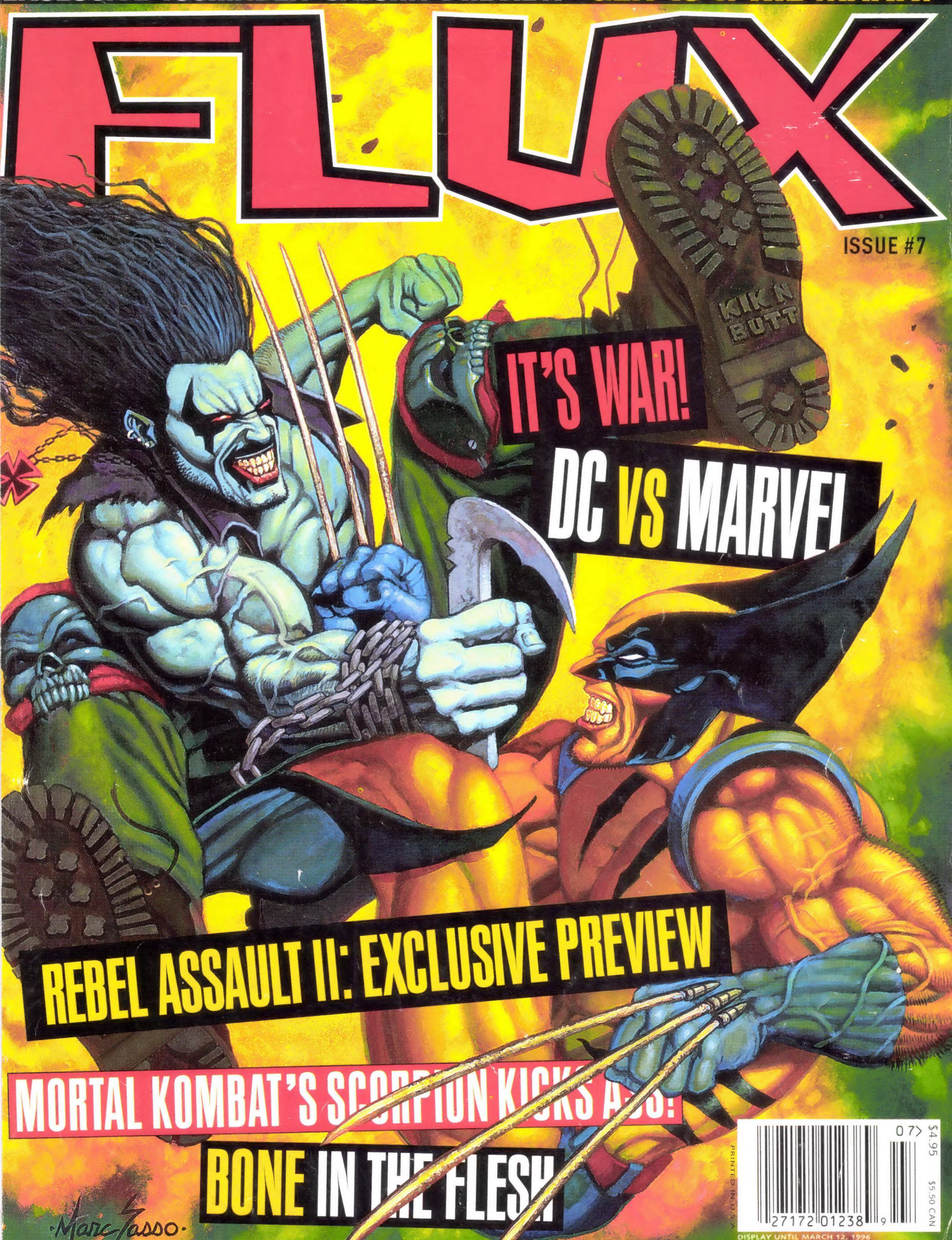
EXCLUSIVE TOSHINDEN SATURN PREVIEW **GEN 13 & THE MAXX!**

FLUX

ISSUE #7



IT'S WAR!

DC VS MARVEL

REBEL ASSAULT II: EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

MORTAL KOMBAT'S SCORPION KICKS ASS!

BONE IN THE FLESH

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DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 12, 1996

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CITY OF THE DEAD!

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CONTAGION

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SHADOW OF THE BAT
#48 - #49

CATWOMAN #31 - #32

DETECTIVE COMICS
#695 - #696

ROBIN #27 - #28

PLUS: THE BATMAN
CHRONICLES #4

THE DISEASE
STARTS
SPREADING
IN JANUARY.

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number #7

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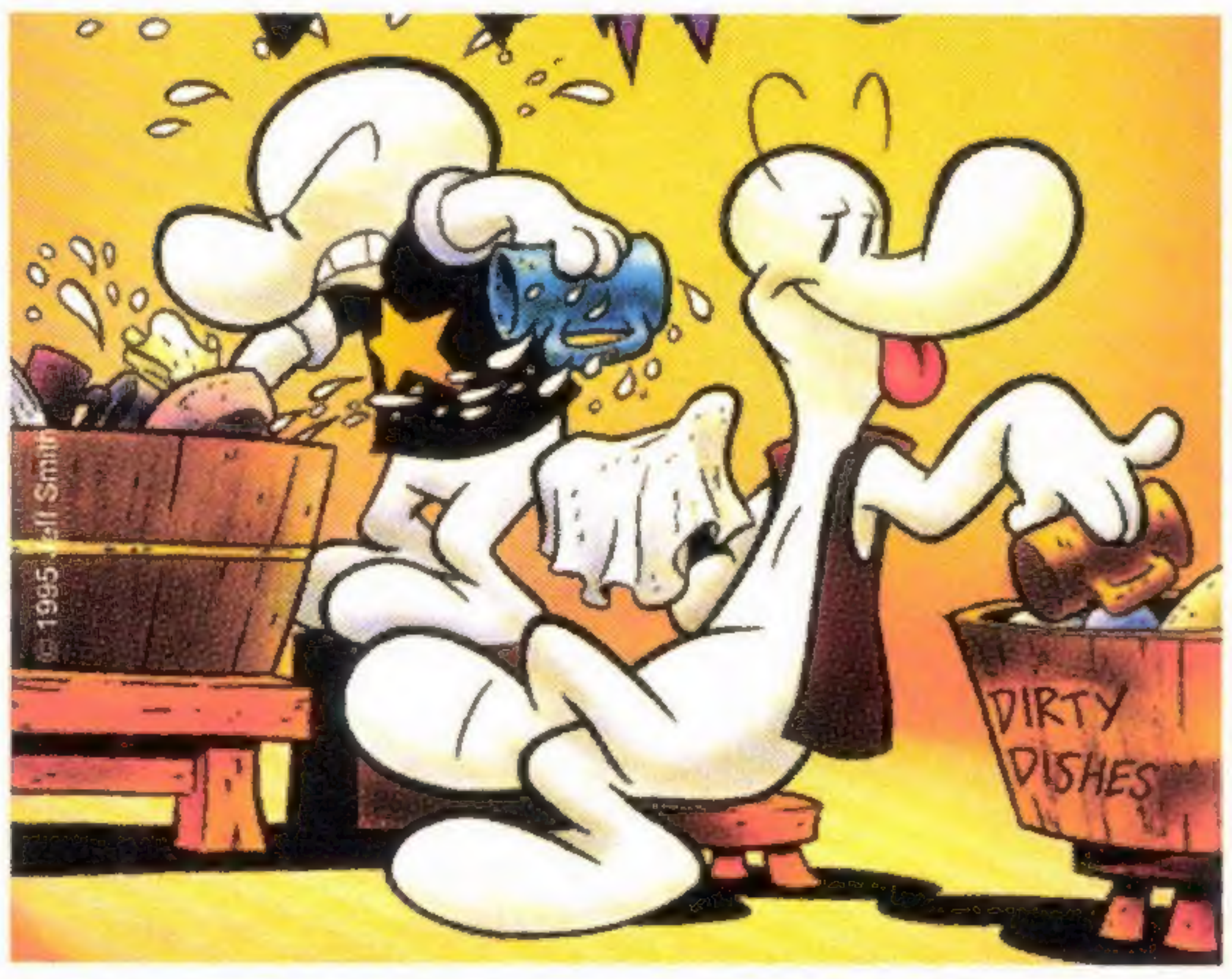

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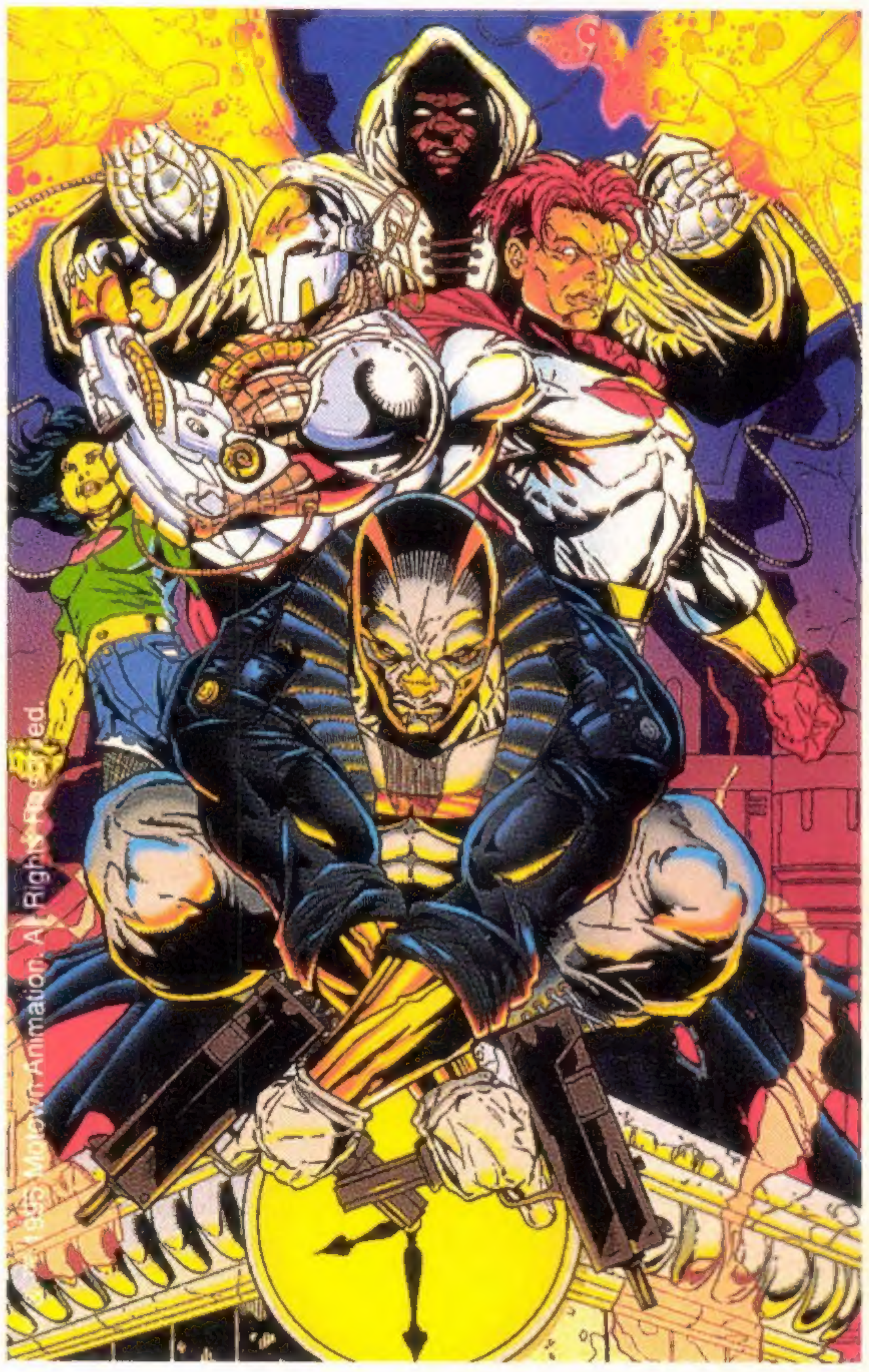
© 1995 Motown Animation. All Rights Reserved.

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Wolverine/Lobo cover art by Marc Sasso. Lobo is ™ and © 1995 DC

Wolverine/Lobo cover art by Marc Sasso. Lobo is ™ and © 1995 DC Comics, Inc. Wolverine is ™ and © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group. All Rights Reserved.

1996: a LOOK ahead

FLUX editors don their Psychic Friends Network hats and predict exactly what will happen in the world of video games and comic books in 1996:

- Lady Death's ever-inflating chest will become so big, she'll need ankle weights.
- Production on 32X and Sega CD games will finally cease. Amen.
- Atari will start paying customers to take home Jaguar units.
- Time Warner Interactive will invent a new 128-bit super-duper gaming system just so *Primal Rage* could be available on a perfect dozen platforms.
- *Madden NFL 97*—hey, who woulda guessed it?
- Still more comic book characters will die, only to be revived later in the interest of lagging sales.
- Nintendo will finally decide on a system format for the Ultra 64. Maybe.
- All the good smut on the Internet will go private and cost big bucks to access.
- Capcom. 3 Words: More *Street Fighter*!
- Bargain bin mania: tons of el-cheapo 16-bit software.
- Nintendo will release the Virtual Girl, a portable, 3-D girlfriend with red hair.
- ESPN2's *Bodyshaping* workout program staring Kiana Tom will win an Emmy in the category of "Best Use Of Hardbody Babe Leg-Spreading."
- The death of ugly, overpriced chromium trading cards.
- *Quake* will shake up more than a few PC gamers.
- The Ultra 64 will finally arrive (maybe), and people will realize that, in addition to curing cancer and saving the world, it's a very good game machine.
- More than a handful of good Macintosh games will be released.
- Two words: Eighties revival. *M-m-m-my-Sharona!*
- The government will decide that yet another cool hobby is evil, rots the brain and generally causes moral decay.
- Game companies wise up and start tying their console systems into the Internet.
- Pearl Jam will release another record without videos, touring or anything else their fans want.
- We might actually learn what the hell's going on in Sam Keith's *The Maxx*.
- Multiplayer gaming will prove to be the future of the industry.
- *EGM*^{4}—same magazine, now available every week!
- Another album by Mariah Carey, whether you like it or not.
- Another movie by Jim Carrey, whether you like it or not.
- Even more *Star* magazine covers with FLUX/O.J. trial babe Gretchen Stockdale.
- *Star Wars* fever builds and builds and builds in anticipation of the film's spruced-up 1997 re-release.
- You still won't have a girlfriend.
- Pound for pound, FLUX will become the most dominant magazine force in the free world (provided we don't burn in hell first).

—THE FLUX EDITORS

FLUX

ISSUE #7

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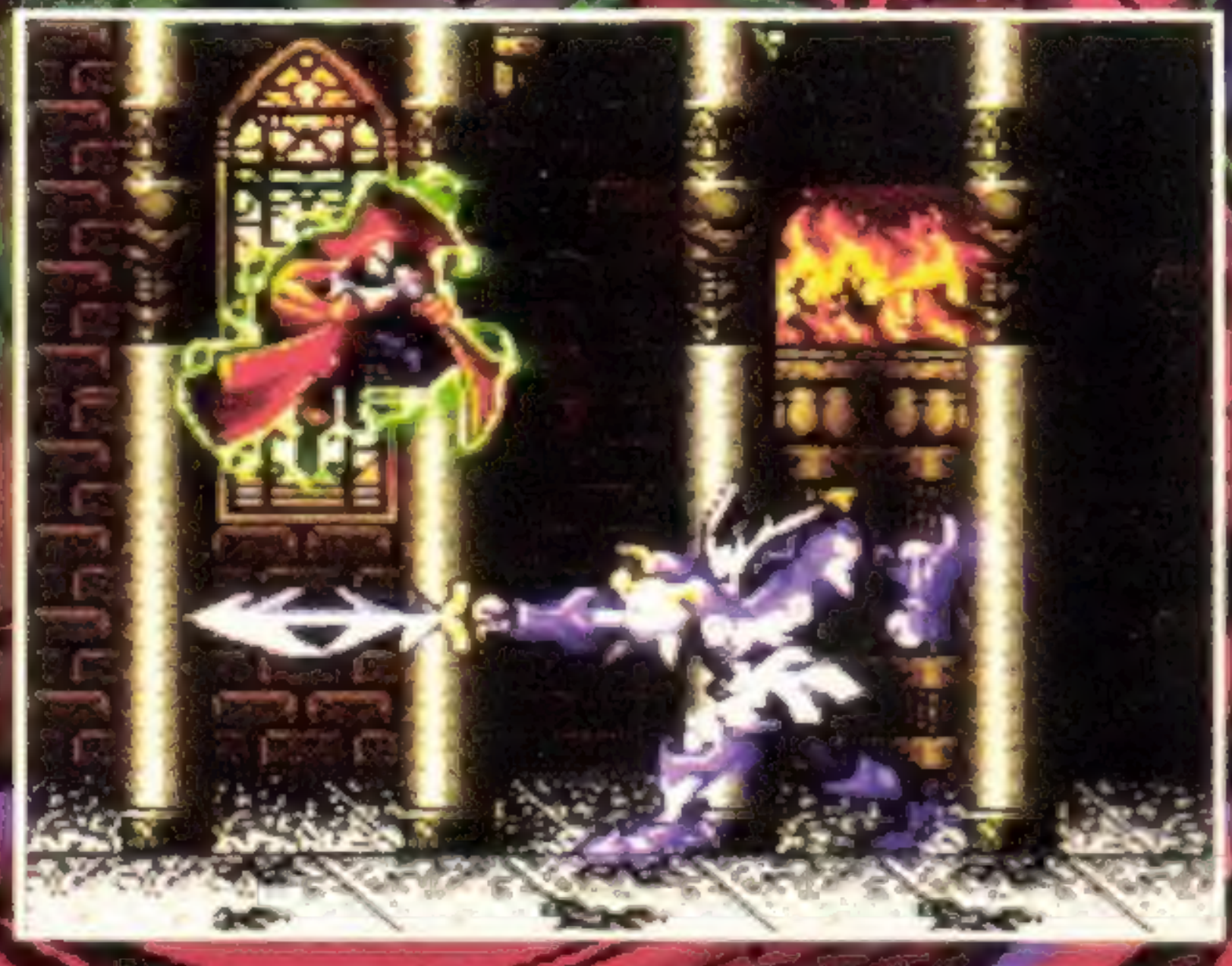
PRINTED IN U.S.A. **ISSN #1074-5602**

The #1 comic book is now a hot new video game!

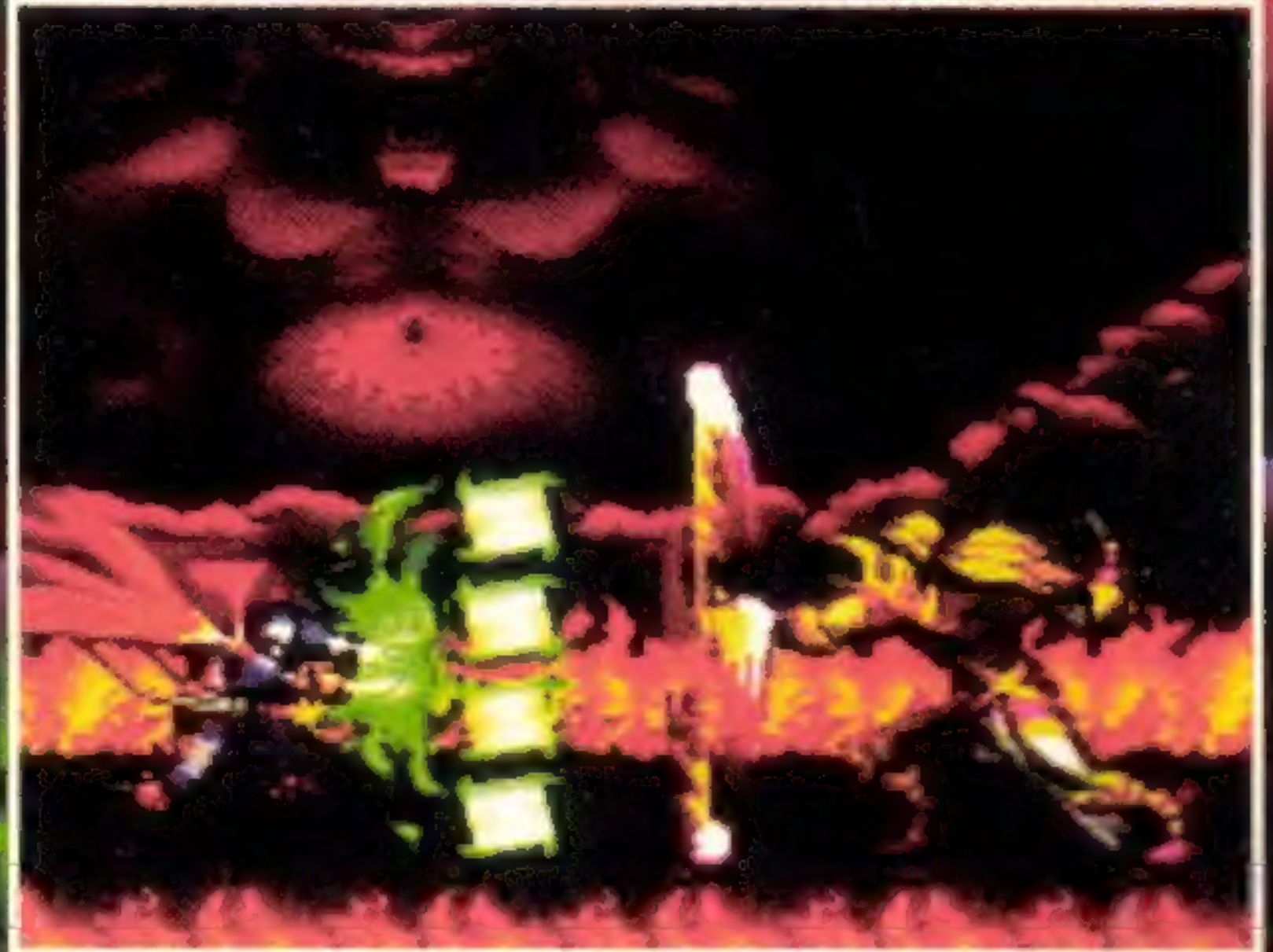
A MATCH MADE IN HELL

A new breed of evil!


Escape Spirit Knight's™ vengeance: Teleport!

Overtkill™ is unstoppable!

Spawn™ vs. Violator™: Eternal Enemies!


Unleash the fury of the full force blast!

Rooftop vengeance!

TODD McFARLANE'S

SPAWN™

THE VIDEO GAME

Infinite powers are yours, but use them at the cost of your soul! As Spawn, you are the pawn in an endless battle between the Mad One™ and the Lord of Darkness! Your enemies—Violator, Redeemer™, Overtkill—are everywhere! Can you survive 17 levels of 24-meg madness? Experience combat in the intense graphic style of the comic that started it all: Todd McFarlane's Spawn!

SUPER NES®

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A AGES 6+

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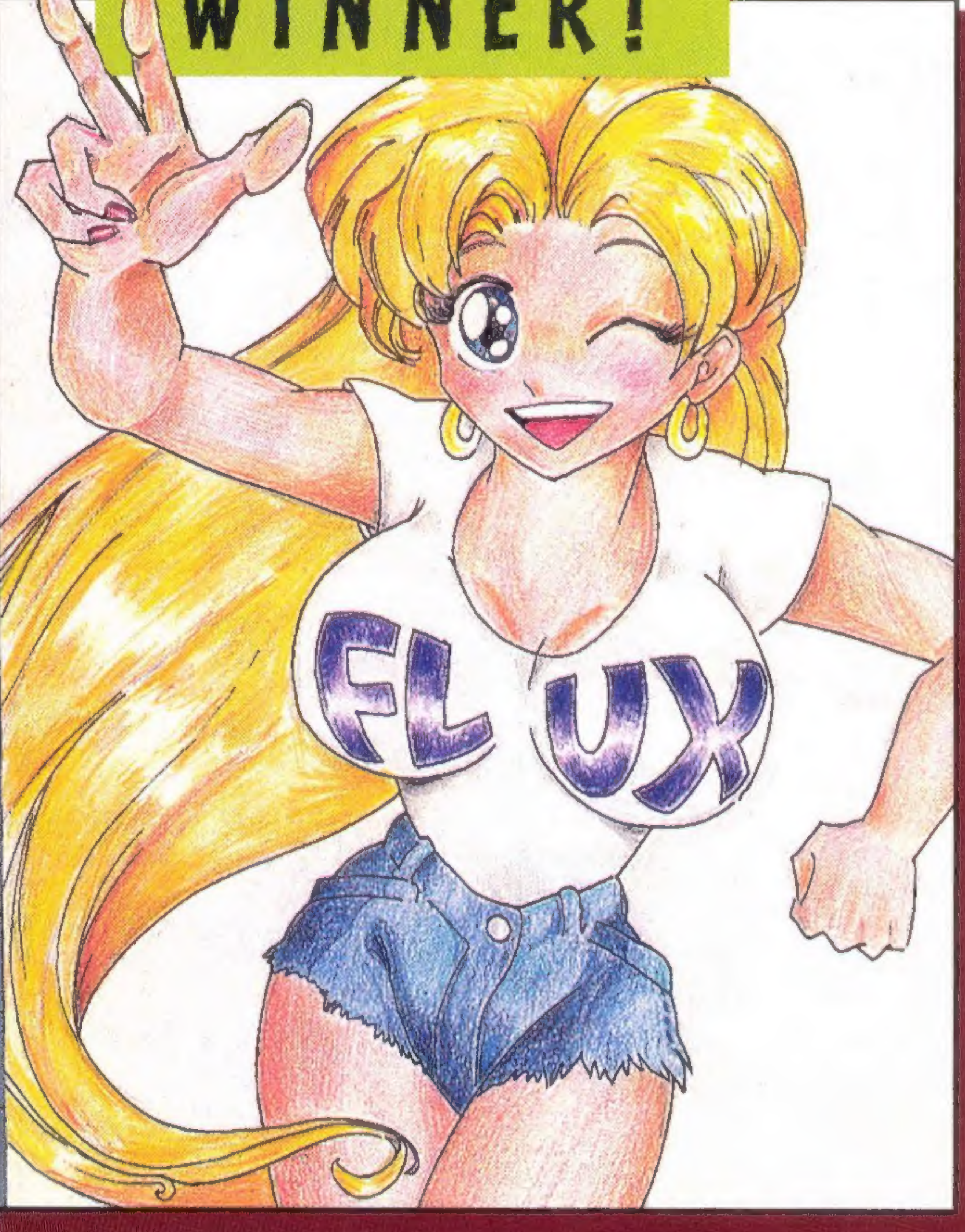
Acclaim entertainment, inc.

backlash

We asked you to draw us a spokeswoman and you did. Some were great, some awful, and some just plain obscene, but we appreciate each and every submission. So without further ado, here they are—the results of the first annual FLUXWoman reader art contest! (At least the ones we could print!)

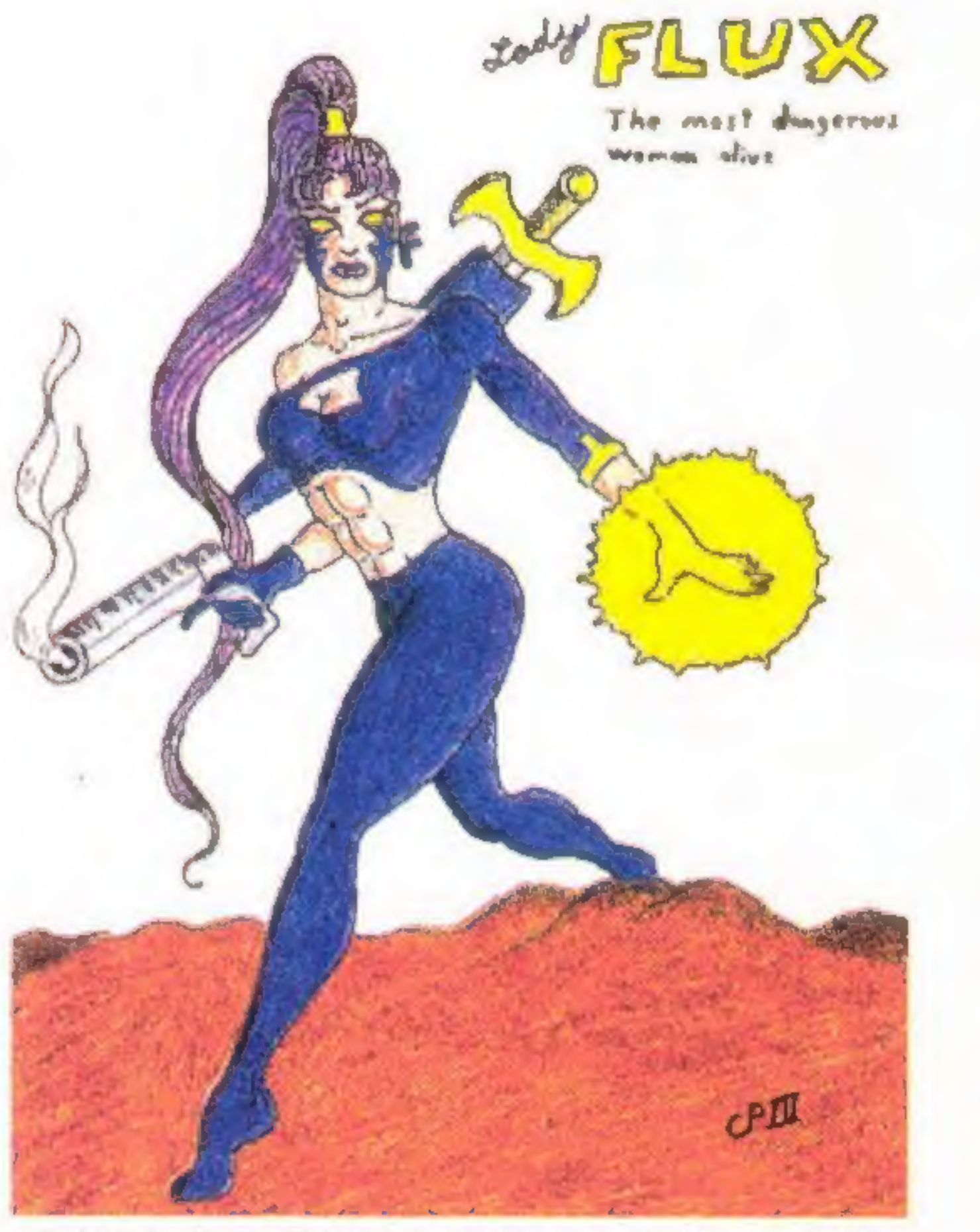
WINNER!



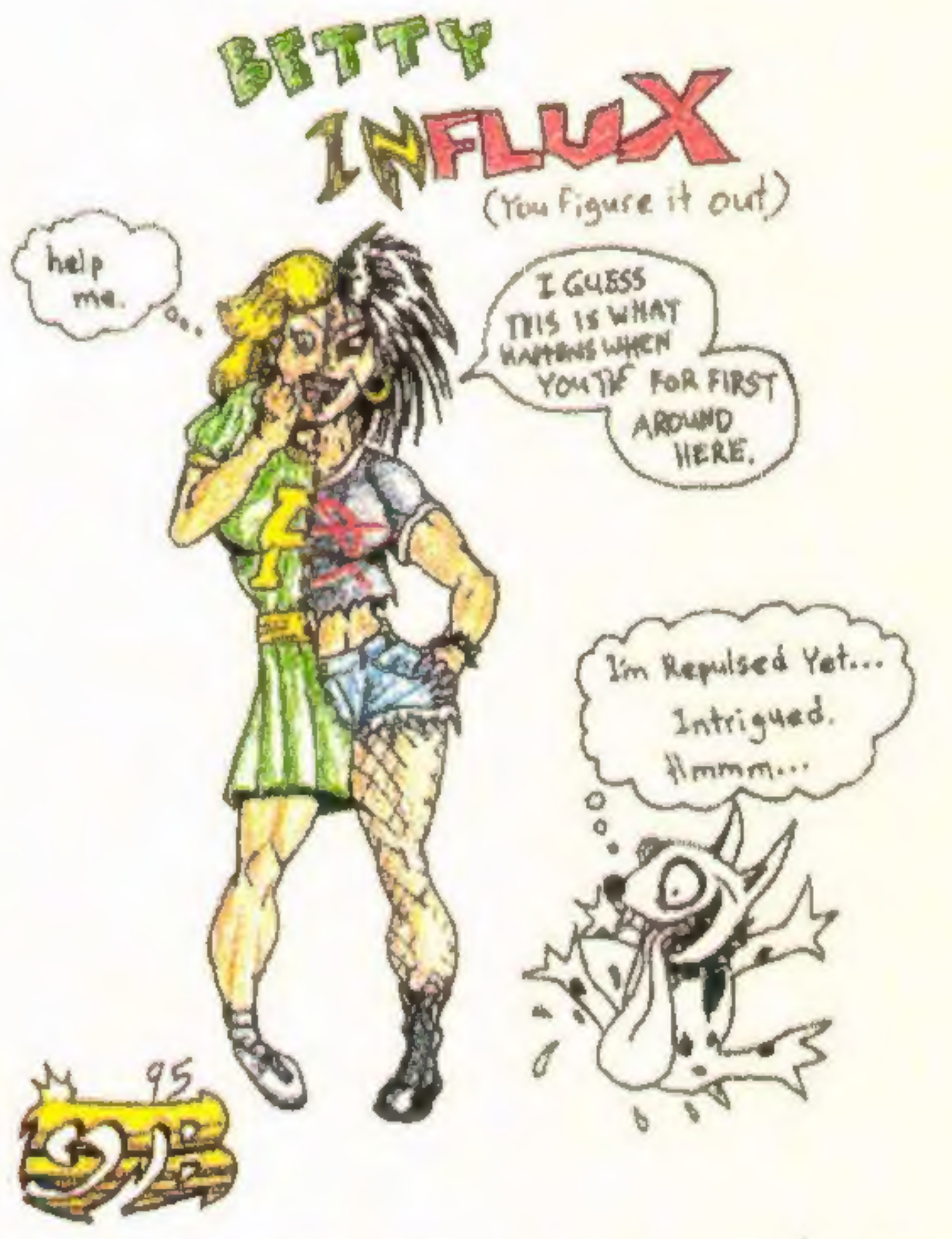
I RECENTLY SAW THE BLURB on your letters page regarding the creation of a FLUX Spokeswoman. Enclosed is my drawing of what I think she would look like. I'm sending in my drawing to demonstrate that the female portion of your readers may have something worthwhile or creative to contribute to your magazine. Although she looks like a stereotypical bimbo, I assure you she's not. As FLUX Woman, she can hold her own against any guy in video game competitions. She's also a second-year chemistry major and her other interests include karate and rollerblading.

And anybody who talks to her chest instead of her face gets decked!

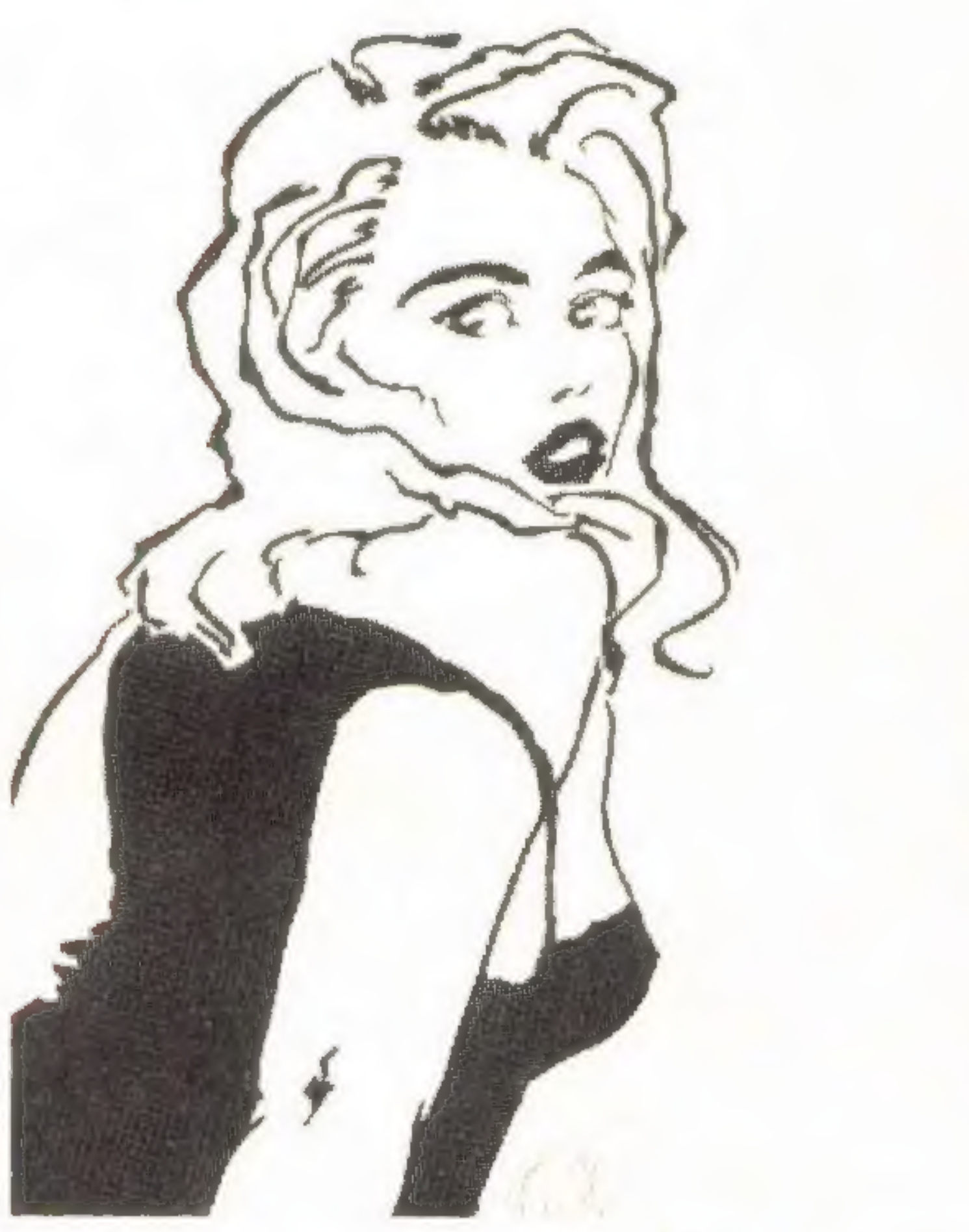
—CHRISTINE WHITE
Niagara Falls, NY


Lady FLUX
The most dangerous woman alive
CPIII

CARLOS PHILLIPS III, Effart, PA


BETTY
INFLUX
(You figure it out)
help me.
I GUESS THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE FOR FIRST AROUND HERE.
I'm Repulsed Yet... Intrigued. Hmmm...
95

GABE BURGERS, San Antonio, TX



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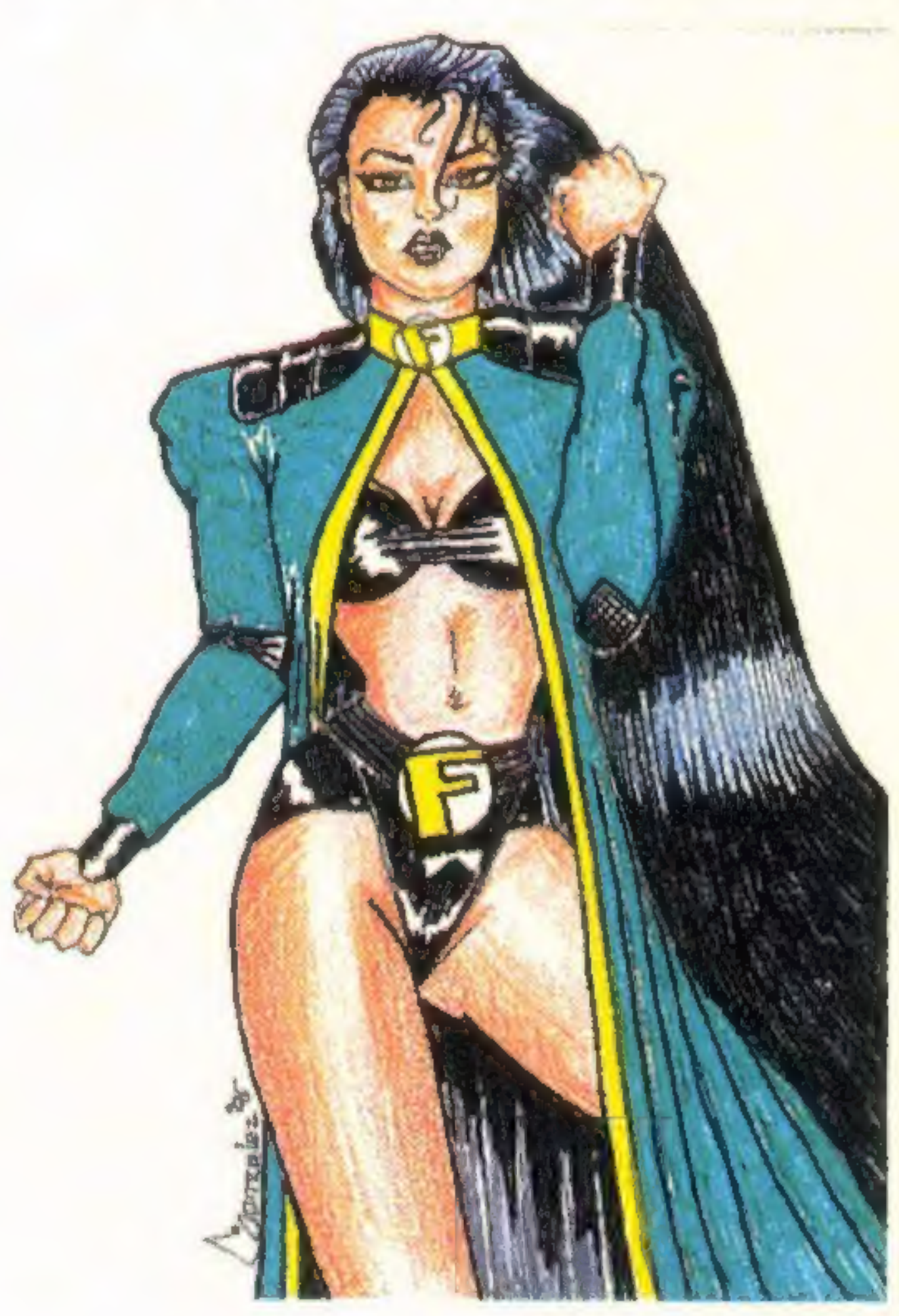
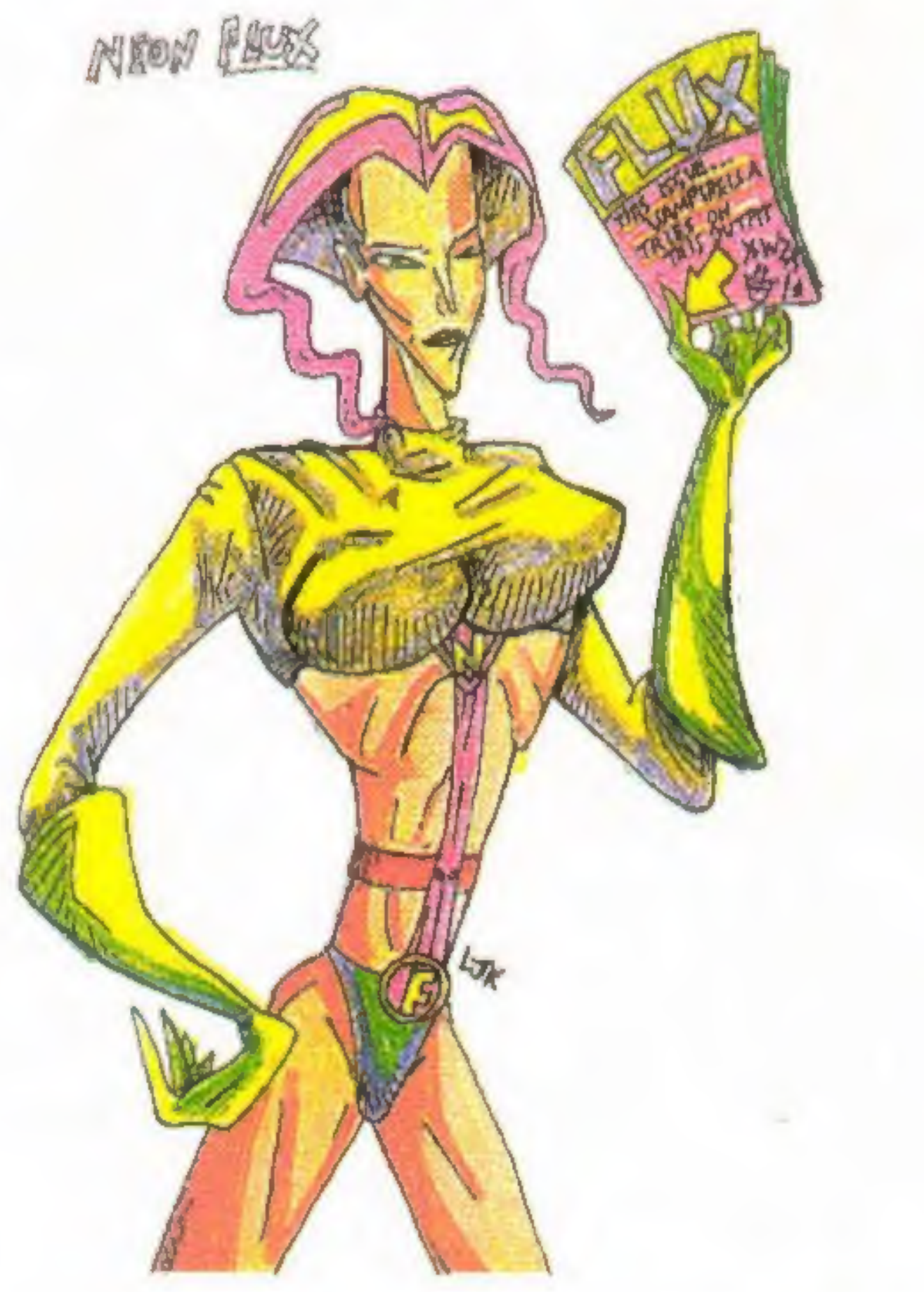
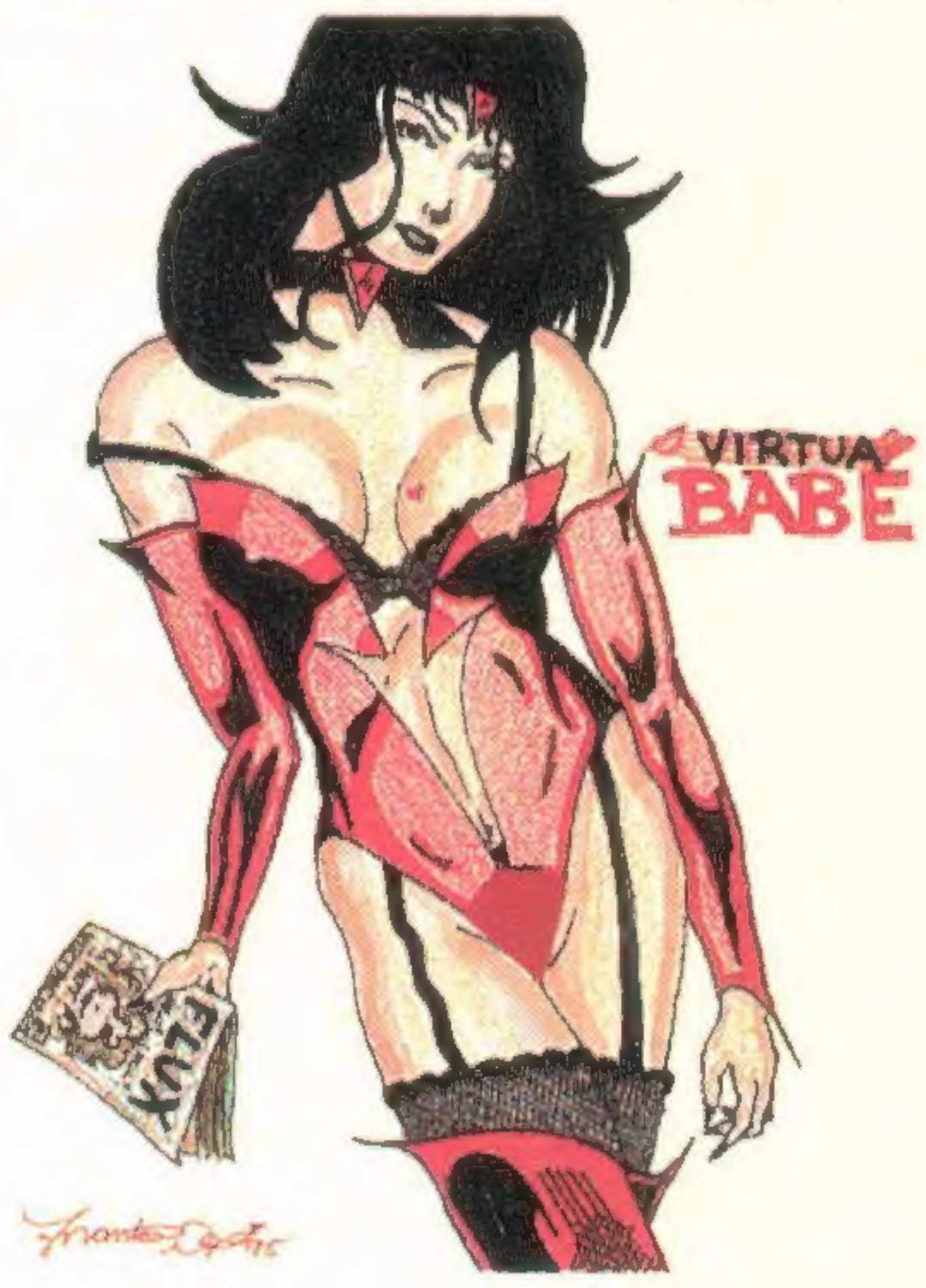


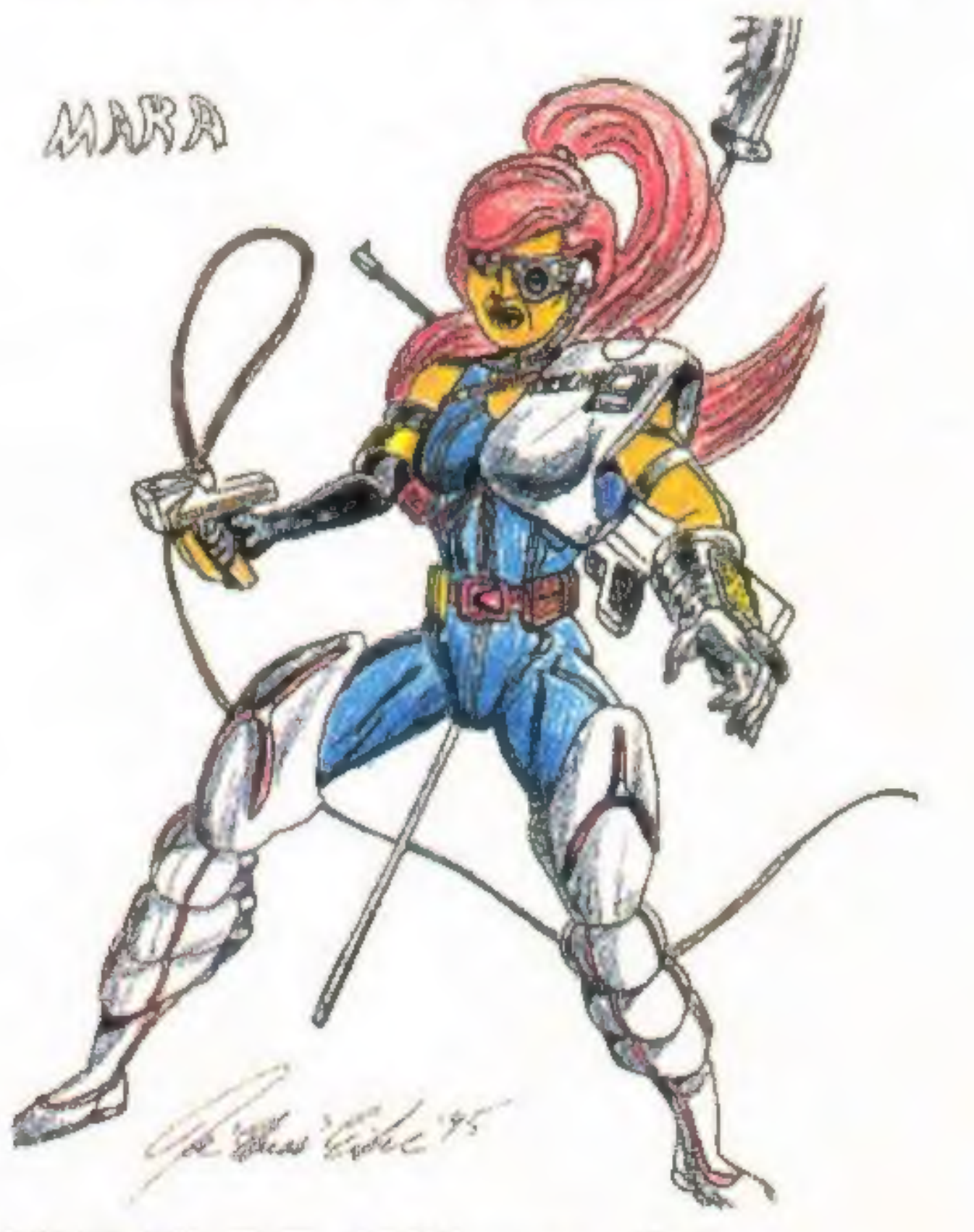
HECTOR GONZALEZ, Dallas, TX



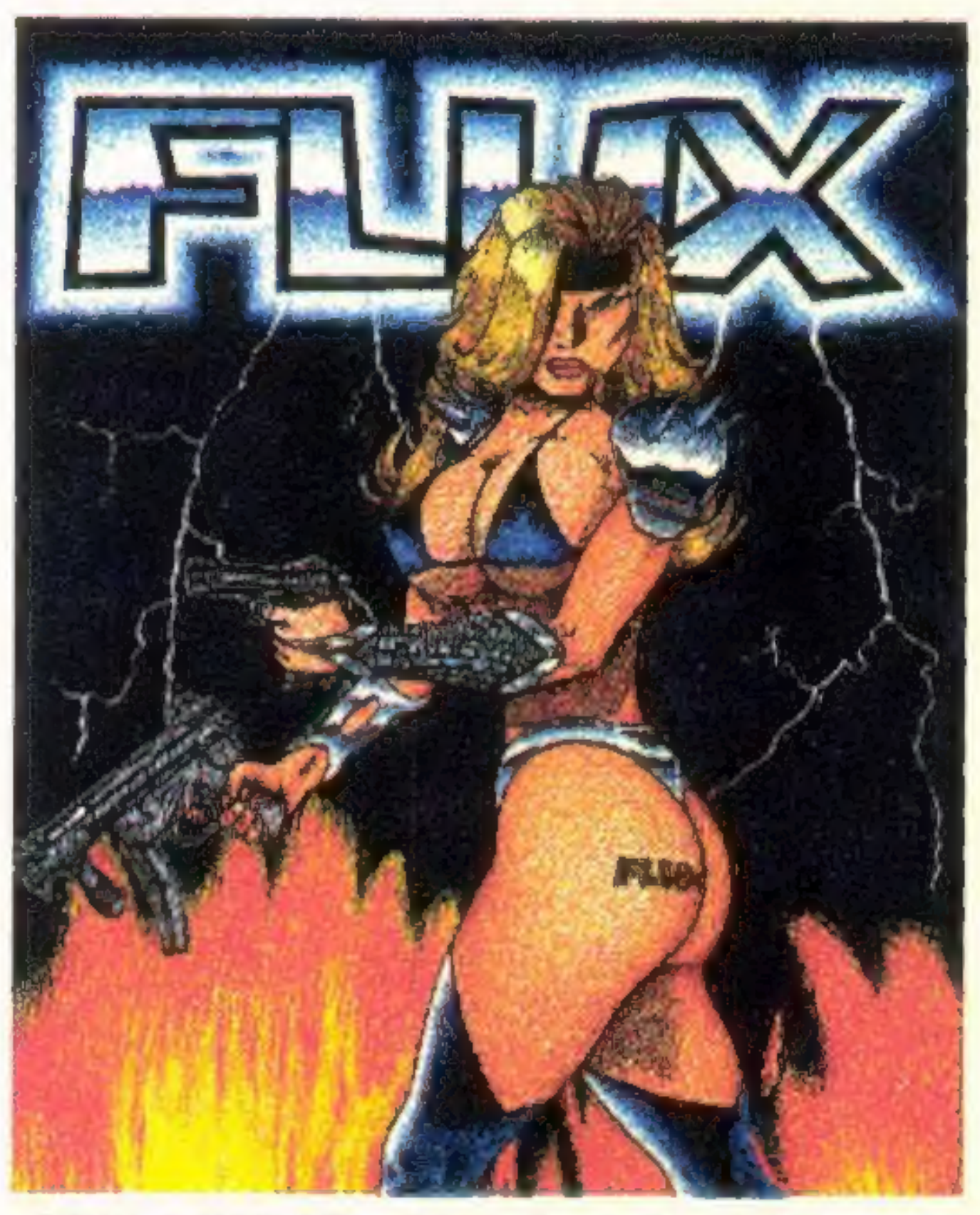
LOGAN KEES, Carrollton, TX



FRANKIE NIX, Asheboro, NC



JOE ELBE, Willows, CA



JON HICKS, Westbrook, ME

HATE MAIL OF THE MONTH

RECENTLY, MY 11-YEAR-OLD son purchased FLUX, issue #6. It looked innocent enough. "Simpsons Invasion" on the cover, Batman and Robin on page 5. The day after he purchased it, he brought it on the bus to read on the way to school. When he arrived home later that day, he came off the bus in tears telling me that he was in trouble and that his magazine was taken away from him by the bus driver because it was "causing a problem." I couldn't imagine what he was talking about until I saw the pages in question.

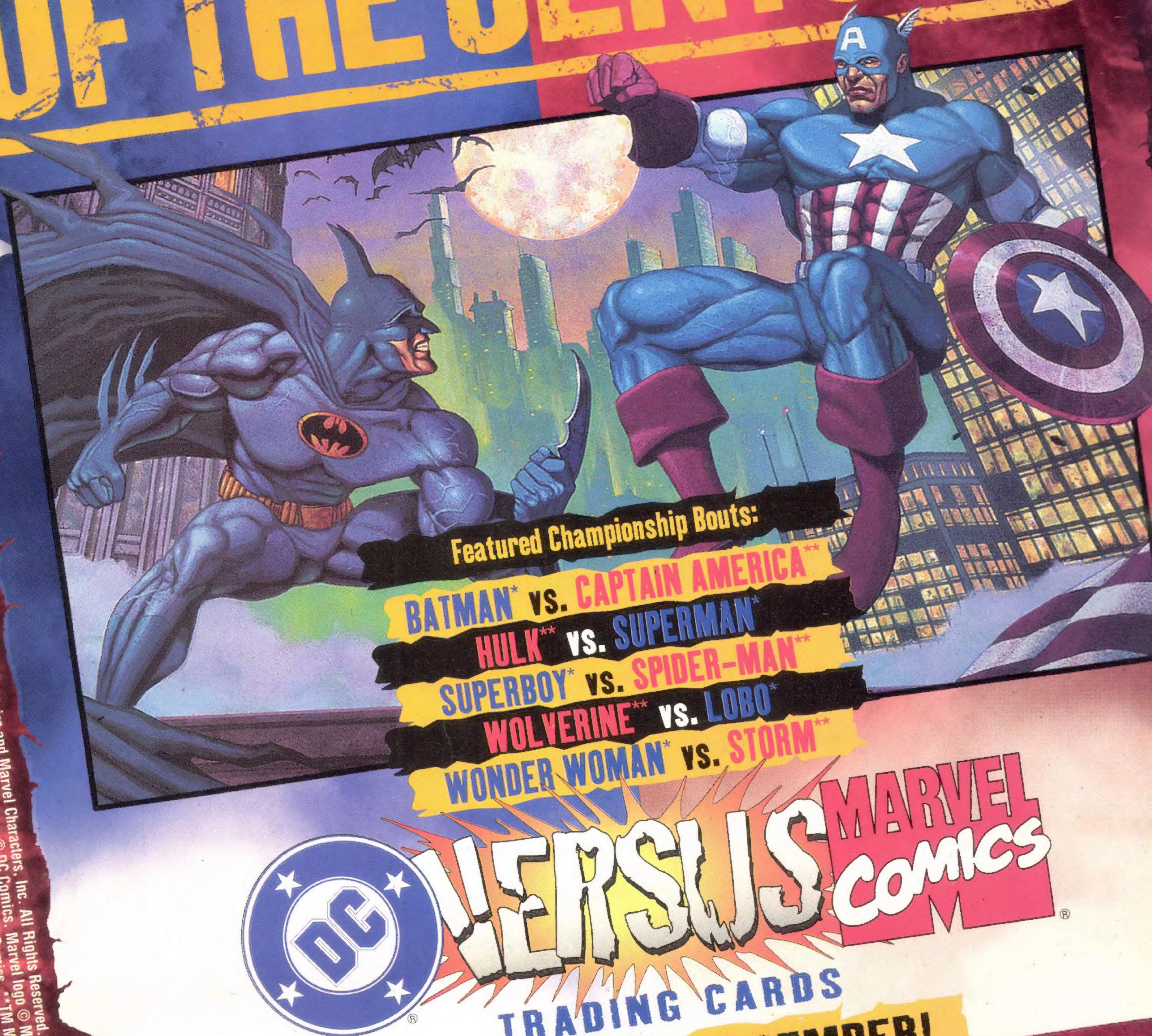
Pages 68 & 69—**Vampirella X-Posed!!!**

Now, I'm a 38-year-old mother of two, and far from a prude. But seeing five pictures of a girl with her well-endowed chest hanging out the bottom of her costume and thigh-high leather boots angers me! I really didn't think I had to inspect my son's video game strategy guides before he did. I know there's nothing you can do now. The damage has already been done.

—JAN RUBINO
Cliffwood Beach, NJ

CORRECTION

In issue #6, we inadvertently stated that Earthworm Jim for Game Boy is an Interplay product, when in fact it is manufactured by Playmates. Sorry for the confusion.

SkyBox International Presents

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HULK** VS. SUPERMAN*
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WOLVERINE** VS. LOBO*
WONDER WOMAN* VS. STORM**

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TRADING CARDS

COMING THIS DECEMBER!

IF YOU MISS THIS BATTLE, YOU'LL MISS THE WHOLE WAR.

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The deadliest fighting tournament in the universe has come to the PC. All the lethal combinations, all the merciless fatalities, all the raw brutality of the Mortal Kombat 3 arcade game, all on CD-ROM. Uncover the new PC encryption "kodes" and unlock mysterious, debilitating powers. Crank up the digitized sound and music that's identical to the coin-op's. Rain destruction down upon your friends with the network and modem play capabilities. Mortal Kombat 3. Your PC won't know what hit it. Also available on Sega and Nintendo home systems.

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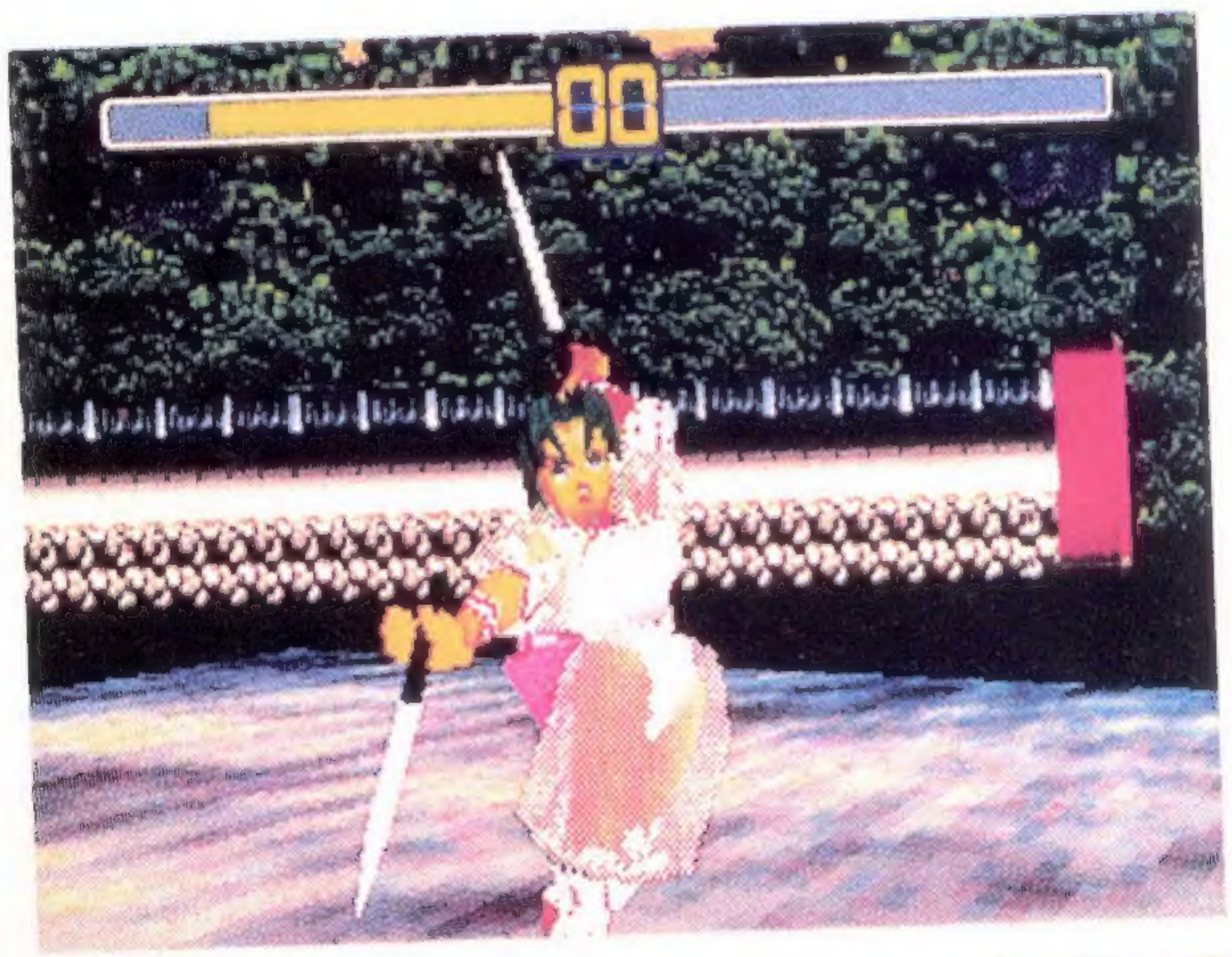
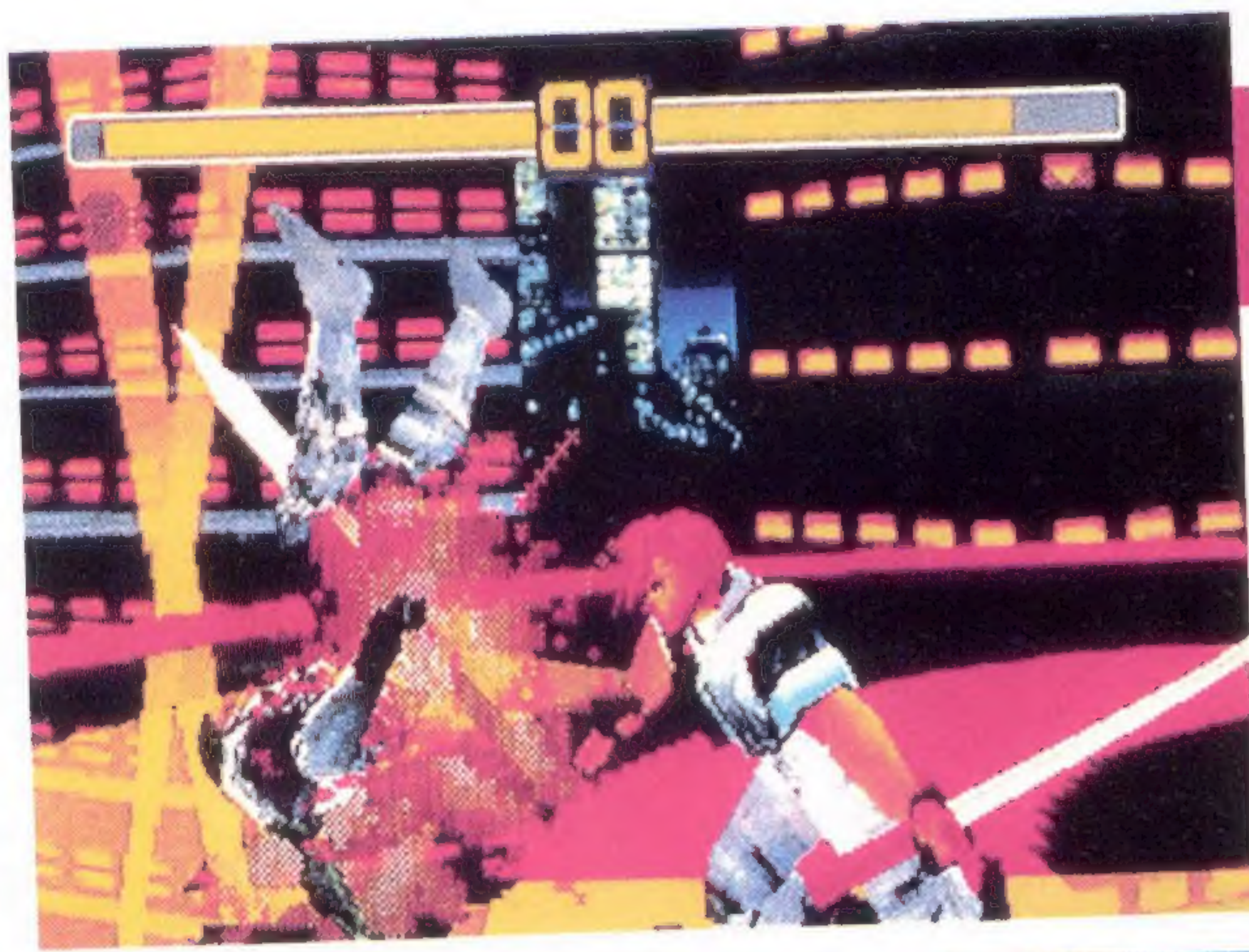
TURN
THE OTHER CHEEK.
AND IT WILL BE
RIPPED FROM
YOUR FACE.
mk3 for the pc

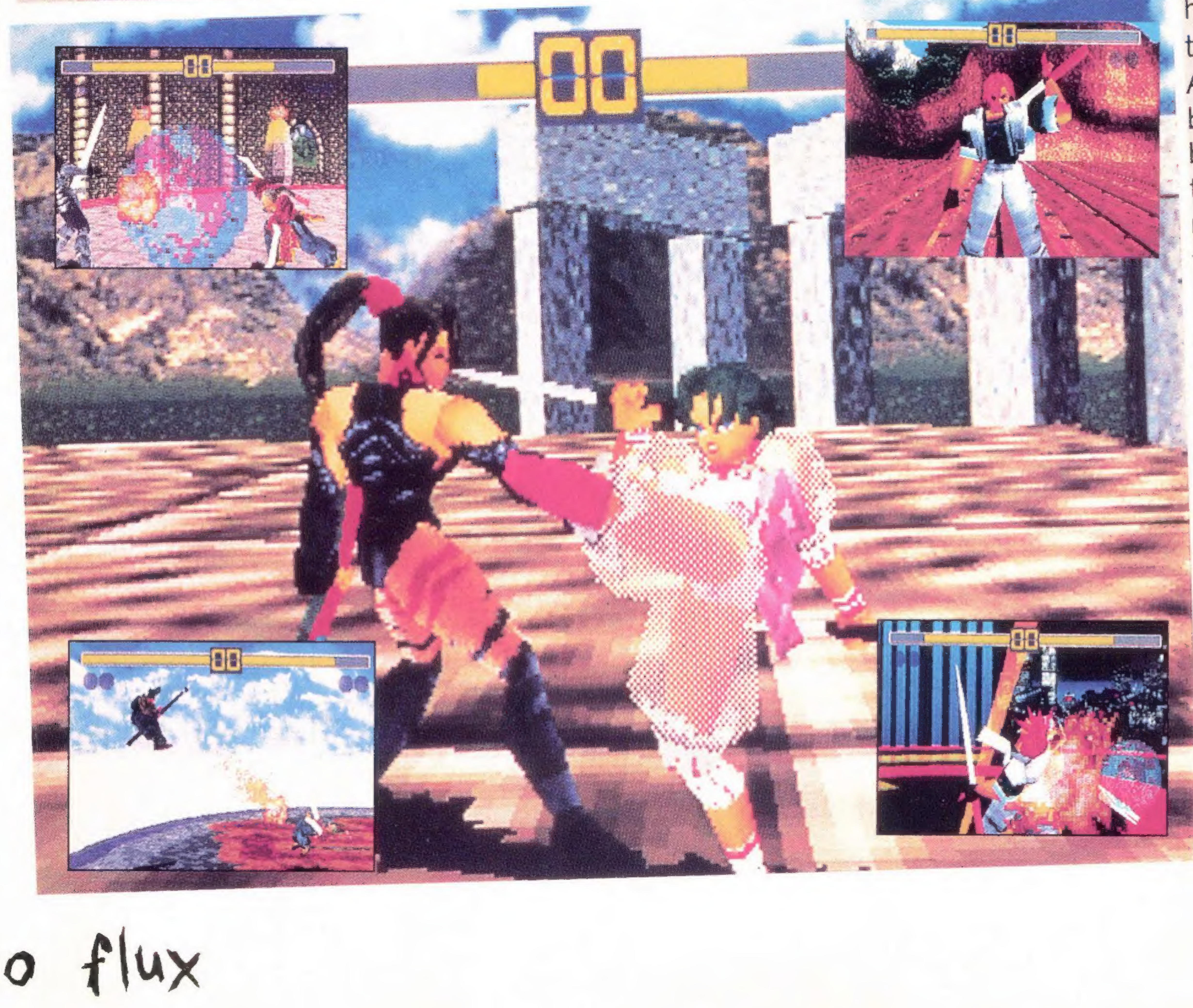
static

stuff that doesn't suck

TOSHINDEN LANDS ON SATURN







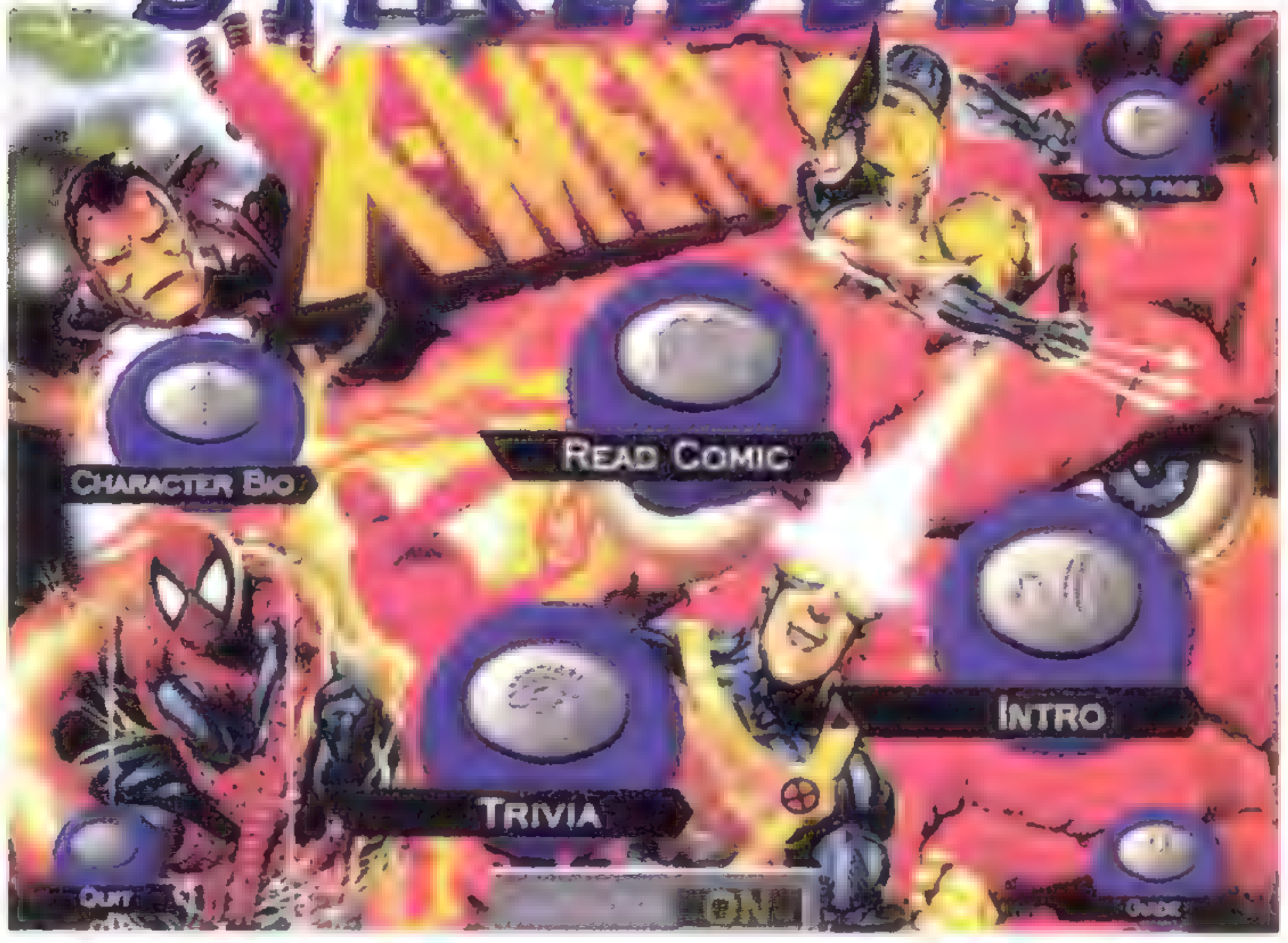
EXCLUSIVE FIRST PIX!

The Saturn translation of *Virtua Fighter* was great, if not slightly flawed. Then *Virtua Fighter Remix* fixed the mistakes. But the state of the Virtuart, *Virtua Fighter 2*, will be slamming home on Saturns this month. And, unlike the rumors you may have heard, there's *nothing* missing from the Saturn version. All the characters. All the music. All the moves. All the backgrounds. All running at a mind-blowing 60 frames per second. And if that doesn't tickle your fancy, wait a month to see the Saturn update of the PlayStation staple, *Battle Arena Toshinden*, cleverly titled *Battle Arena Toshinden Remix*. The texture-mapping has reportedly been improved and there's definitely an extra character lurking in there somewhere. Surprised to see the PlayStation heavyweight cropping up on a Sega system? Don't be—despite the leather-clad Sofia's starring role in Sony advertisements a few months back, she really belongs to Takara, who were more than happy to work out an agreement with Sega as well. And besides, Sofia says it herself—"Anytime, anywhere..."

PLAYSTATION AND SATURN GAMES: PC BOUND

Yeah, we know you're filled with lust for Sony and Sega's new 32-bit TV toys, but hold on a sec—that PC you're using to plagiarize school reports could be your ticket to next-gen gaming nirvana. In a very shrewd or very stupid move, both Sony and Sega have just dumped their best new titles—*Wipeout*, *Virtua Fighter Remix*, *Destruction Derby*, and *Panzer Dragoon* among them—on the PC in one form or another. Sega's Saturn conversions run on Diamond Edge's new 3D board, but the upcoming PC releases of older 16-bit titles like *Comix Zone*, *Tomcat Alley* and *Sonic CD* will work in plain ol' Windows 95. Meanwhile, PlayStation hits like *Twisted Metal*, *WarHawk* and *ESPN Extreme Games* will be DOS compatible at first with Win95 versions to follow. Some of the games will feature enhancements (i.e. network support for *Wipeout*) but all promise the same console goodness on the PC. But with all the 32-bit killer apps coming out for the home computers we already own...well, why buy a Saturn or a PlayStation at all?

PAPER SHREDDER



Marvel's titanic tale from Giant-Size X-Men #1 that introduced us to the second generation of X-characters is now available as an interactive PC/Mac CD-ROM. The voice of Wolverine guides you through more than 80-pages of classic X-Men action featuring all new computer-enhanced coloring and a "Zoom-in Zoom-out" option to get better views of your favorite panels. The CD-ROM includes additional biography pages on your favorite mutants and contains animation and music from the popular *X-Men* Saturday morning cartoon. And what Marvel product would be complete without an introduction from Stan Lee and our friendly neighborhood Spider-Man? For approximately $15—far less than the original comic book—you can own this cool new X-package and never worry about bags, boards or preservation. Also available on CD-ROM from Marvel are Fantastic Four, Iron Man and Spider-Man.

DIGITALPALOOZA

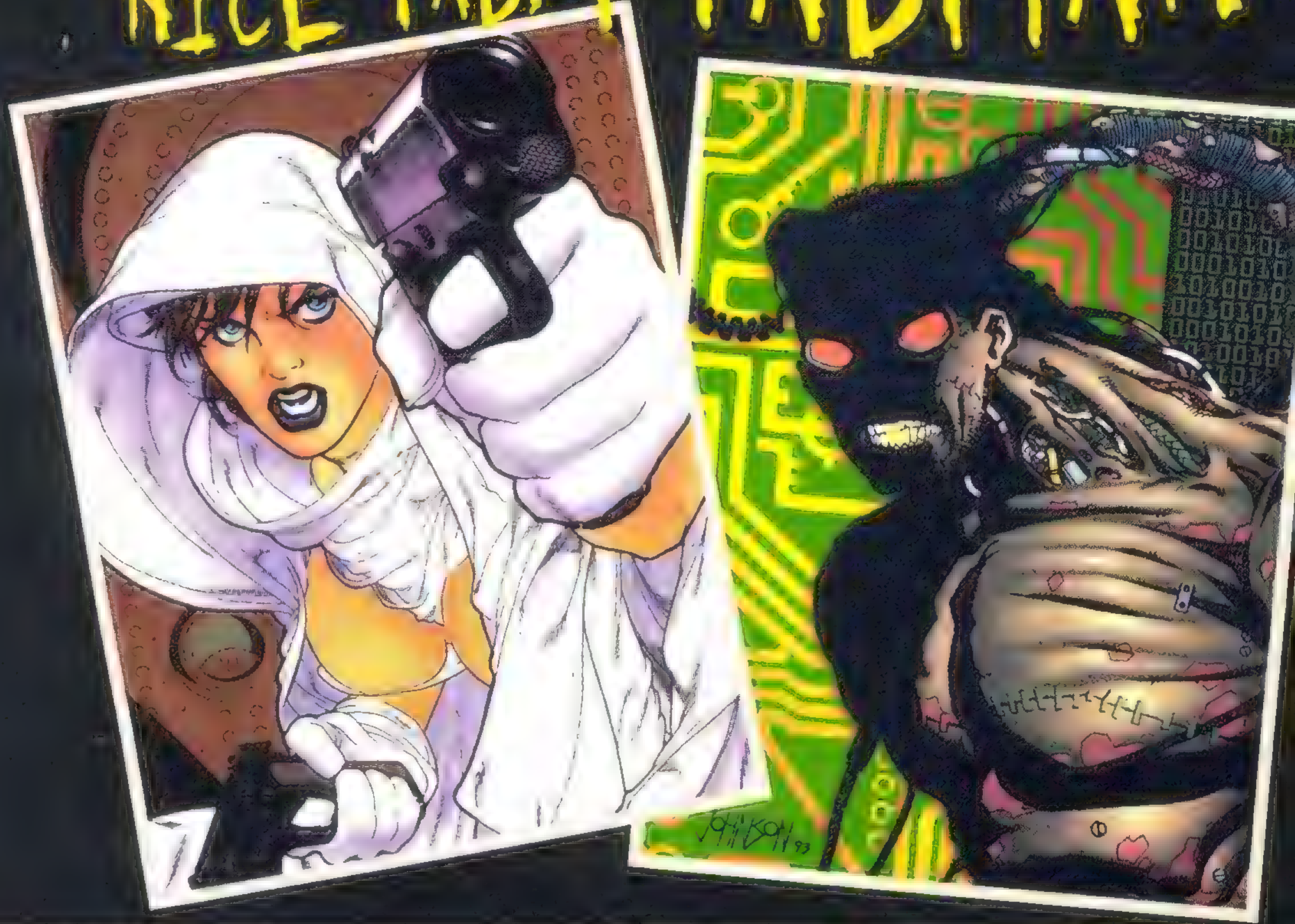
Interactive CD-ROM fanzines have become all the rage lately; but few have the power to entertain like *DigiZINE*. In short, this new Mac/Windows CD-ROM from Ahrens Interactive is a cool magazine with moving pictures, audio clips and computer animation. Imagine reading Spin and being able to hear music from the band you're reading about—that's what *DigiZINE* is like. The premier issue is divided into three unique sections: Entertainment, Culture & Society and Twisted Topics. In Entertainment, you'll find a jam-packed Nine Inch Nails area featuring video and audio clips, pictures, a thorough band biography and a discography, plus clips (audio and video) of Orange 9mm, the Jesus Lizard and Perry Farrell. In Culture & Society, you can listen and/or watch interviews with painters like Howard Rheingold, independent filmmakers (and see their short films), read essays on the Internet and even check out the latest fashions from hot designers. In Twisted Topics, you can view an animated history of condoms and read fortunes from a warped fortune cookie like "If a man slaps you on the face, turn the other cheek and shoot him." There's also a guide to really weird fanzines like *FAT! so?* (a pro-fat mag), *Heinous* (a zine about Evel Knievel) and *Last Prom*, a zine devoted to those gruesome films shown in driver's ed classes.

To subscribe, send $19.95 (one year, four issues) to Ahrens Interactive, DigiZINE: subs, 400 North State Street, Chicago, Il, 60610. (800) 908-7245 or email at *subscriptions@digizine.com*

DON'T EVER DO THIS

Never superglue a thumbtack to the inside of a car door handle. The pain from being stabbed in the finger by a tack can be excruciating, and the blood flow humorously generous.

NICE PAD, MADMAN



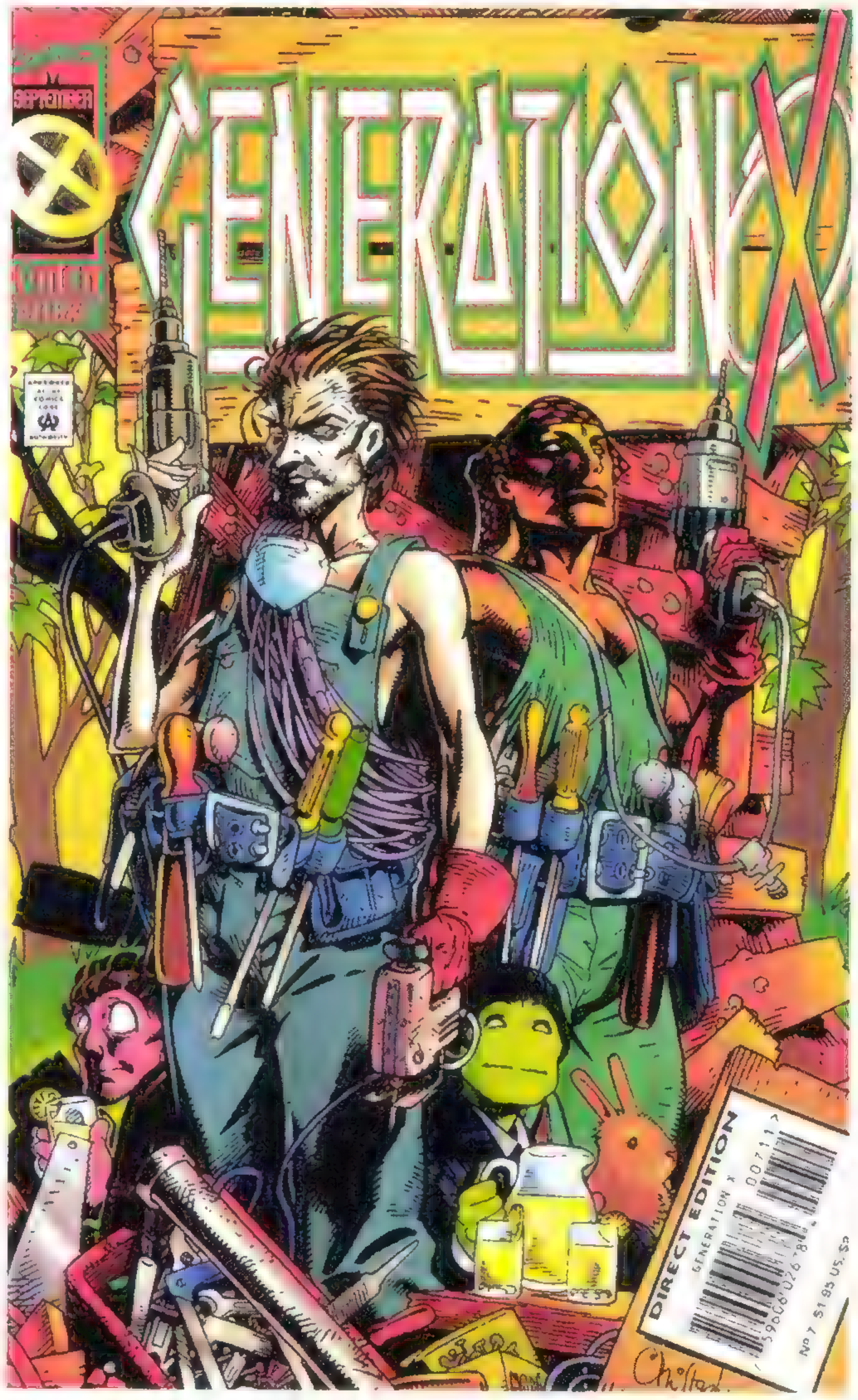
Hey, nerds! Bring your twin loves—computers and comic books—together at last with Chicago-based Nice Pad, Man's high-quality Dark Horse Comics mouse pads. Yes, that's right—now you can thrill to all the fun and action of placing still images under your computer's pointing device! NPM's first crop of foam rubber rectangles—with or without that annoying layer of lamination—feature the entire snappy cast of Mike Allred's *Madman*, Adam Hughes' cover art from *Ghost* #5, a creepy portrait of the Machine and Frank Miller's ominous interpretation of X. These four pads are either in comic stores now or on their way; to see previews of the company's latest batch of computer crusaders, aim your World Wide Web browser at http://www.nicepad.com. (*Intergroup Business Systems, 689 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622 [708] 602-3945]*)

CULTURE SHOCK

If you find interactive magazine television shows like *C/Net Central* a bit too stuffy, you may want to check out *The Anti-Gravity Room*, a new weekly TV series on the Sci-Fi Channel (Saturday mornings, 11:00 Eastern). Hosted by Nick Scoullar, a 14-year-old comic book expert, Shashi Bhatia, a 23-year-old Canadian TV star and Phil Guerrero, a 23-year-old video game master, *The Anti-Gravity Room* explores the cutting-edge world of comic books, video games, music, movies, animation and CD-ROM technology. Gee, sounds like FLUX on TV.

RATED X

A TV movie based on the popular Marvel comic, *Generation X*, has started filming in Vancouver. The two-hour drama staring Matt Frewer as Russell Tresh, Heather McComb as Jubilation Lee, Augustin Rodriguez as Angelo "Skin" Espinosa and Amarilis as Monet "M" St. Croix will air as a FOX Tuesday Night Movie sometime in 1996.



You are...

here

Doom.

The Sony Playstation Custom Edition.

Over 50 levels of madness and mayhem

from Doom I and II.

Plus unique, new levels

of destruction as well.

All the weapons, monsters,

and painful surprises you loved before.

And even a two-player **Deathmatch mode**

for when you're feeling

really, really nasty.

DOOM
on the
Sony Playstation

PlayStation
id SOFTWARE
MATURE
M
AGES 17+

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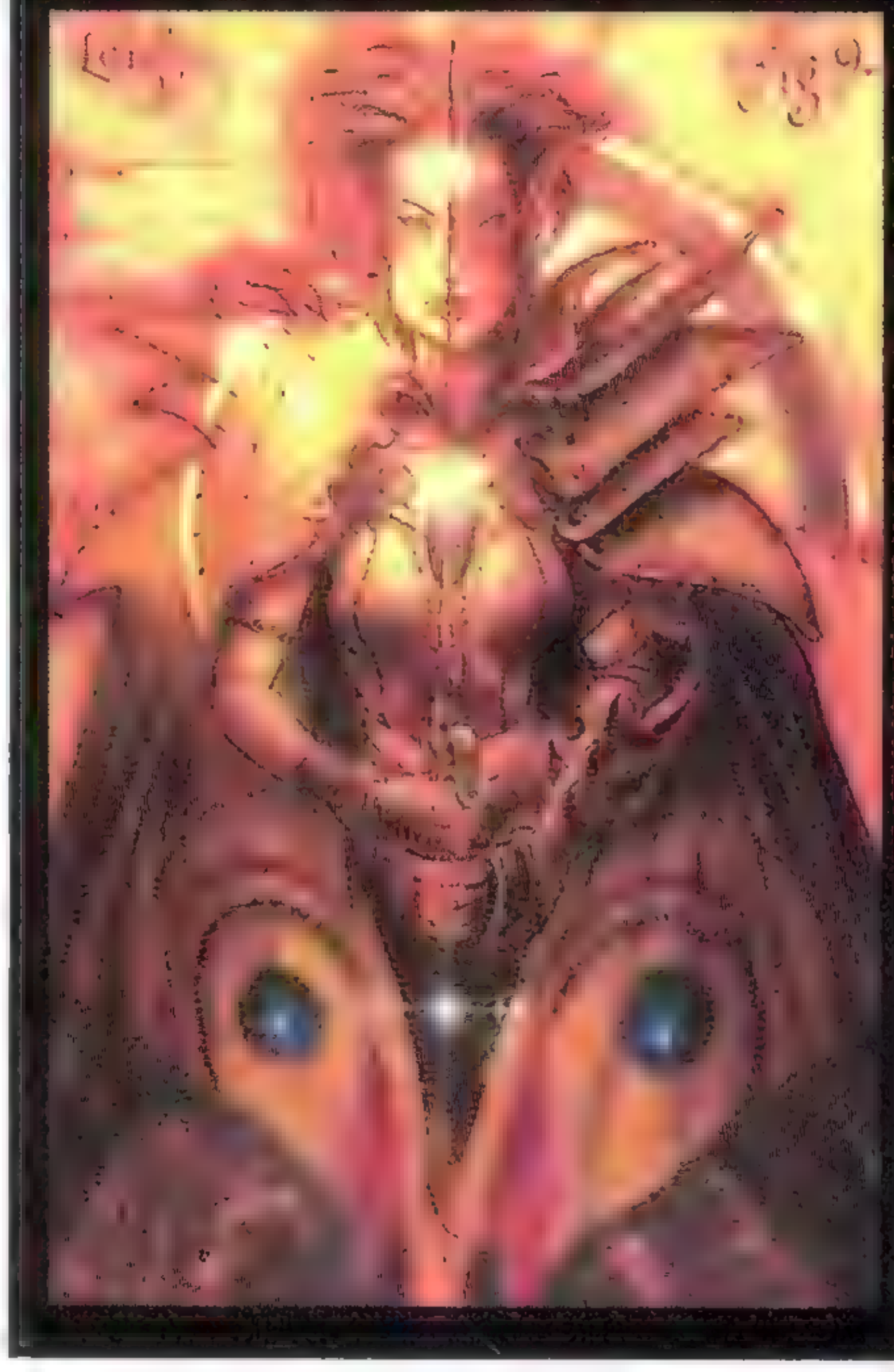
Kombat Training

Did you know that Mortal Kombat II's Jax was actually supposed to be in the original *MK*—under the name of *MK3*'s riot cop, Kurtis Stryker? You would if you had Threshhold Entertainment's new Windows CD-ROM, *The Ultimate Guide To Mortal Kombat.* And, completely true to its name, there's nothing this CD doesn't deliver to the *Mortal* masses—extensive sections on the hit film, the live tour, the animated video, how to buy neat *MK* junk and, of course, a huge collection of game information, spanning all three titles in both the arcade and home incarnations. *TUGTMK* includes moves for every *MK* character, secret codes for the home games and the recent *Ultimate MK3* coin-op, interviews with Ed Boon and John Tobias, tons of behind-the-scenes movie footage and game sketches and, believe it or not, real martial arts instruction by film and tour choreographer Pat Johnson (with demonstration by Scorpion and Sub-Zero—perfect for hyperactive 12-year-olds hopped up on caffeine and adrenaline!) From *MK*'s humble beginnings to its megamillion-dollar present, *The Ultimate Guide To Mortal Kombat* is pretty damned fascinating—and it's certainly the coolest *reference* CD-ROM ever.

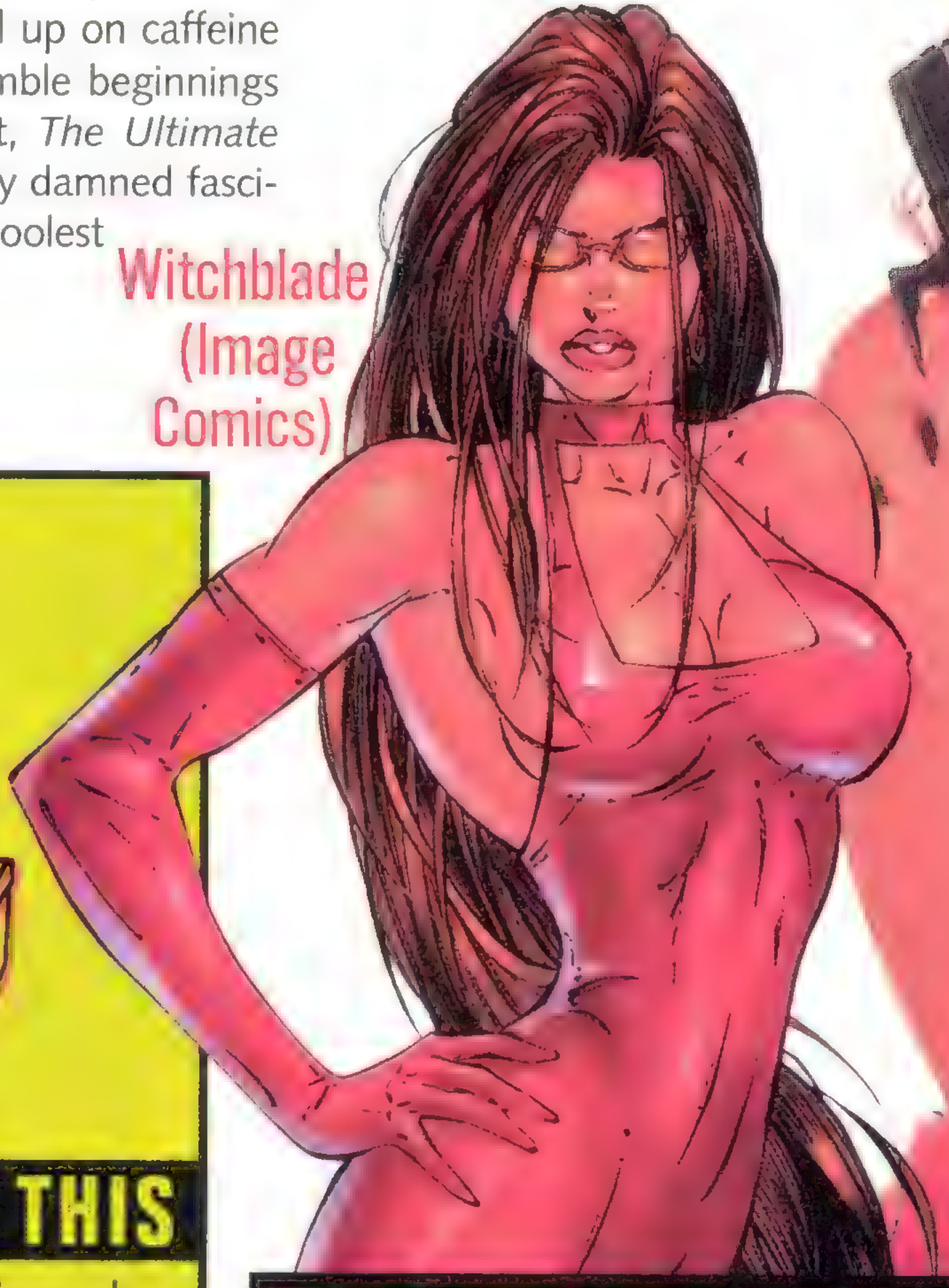
FINISHING MOVE
FATALITY

DREAM WARRIORS

To date, White Wolf has produced some deliciously nasty role-playing games. *Vampire: The Masquerade* dealt with everyone's favorite nocturnal plasma suckers, and *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* was cool almost entirely from the name and its implications of blood-matted fur and the end of the world. But their latest release, *Changeling: The Dreaming*, aims not for the jugular but for the mind. Set in a world where childhood fantasies cross over into reality and reality fights back, *Changeling* leans more toward storytelling and improv theater than traditional dice 'n' daggers RPGing. According to the game's introduction, players will not only be able to harness the power of dreams and tap magical powers, but they'll find what it's like to be "unable to express the sublime beauty welling forth from their soul." Uh, okay. Luckily, most fairy tales have grim undertones, and *Changeling* exploits them as well, so it's not all sublime beauty. But if traditionally brawny RPGs don't appeal to your brain, *Changeling*'s accent on imagination and inspiration over hit points and hobgoblins should be just the right snack to feed your head.



Tracy Scoggins, star of Studio 3DO's new *Snow Job* game



Witchblade (Image Comics)

BABEWATCH

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DON'T EVER DO THIS

Never stick little dots of airplane glue to the seat of a public toilet. For the person who plants himself on the potty, getting up will require tearing off little chunks of flesh!

Now with 50% more beef, pork, and puppies.

EWJ 2
EARTHWORM JIM

Him who is Jim is back --and tastier than ever before.

Unlike some other games that we could mention, Earthworm Jim 2™ has no fat, fillers, or cheap by-products. Using our private recipe, we've carefully blended stunning graphics, humor, outrageous tunes, amazing game play, and one butt-kicking annelid to create the ultimate gaming feast. Grab a copy and dig in to this meal for your mind.

Hey, killer games aren't rare they're served well done (like Earthworm Jim 2)!

Care for a second helping?

EARTHWORM JIM 2

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SEGA SATURN

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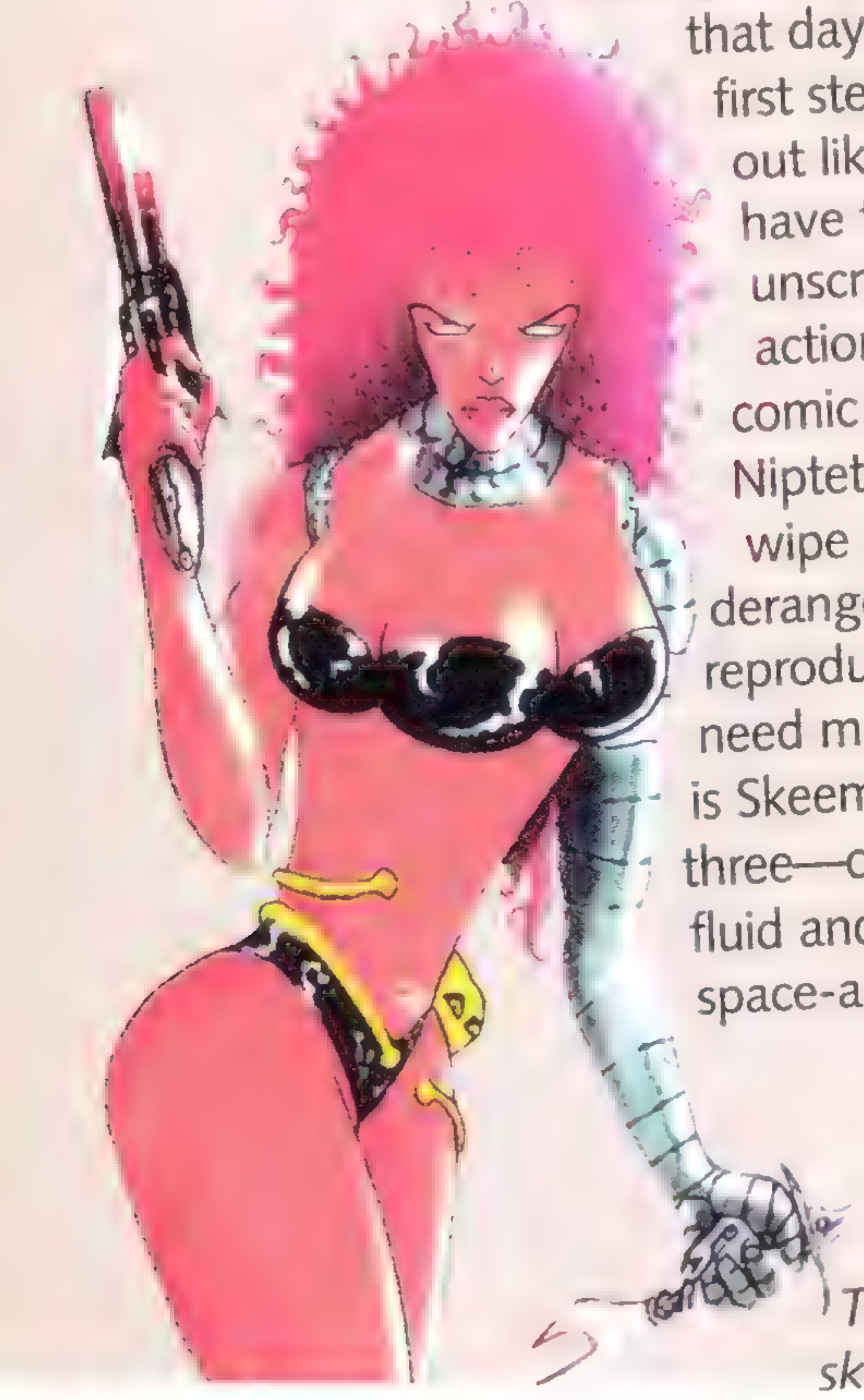
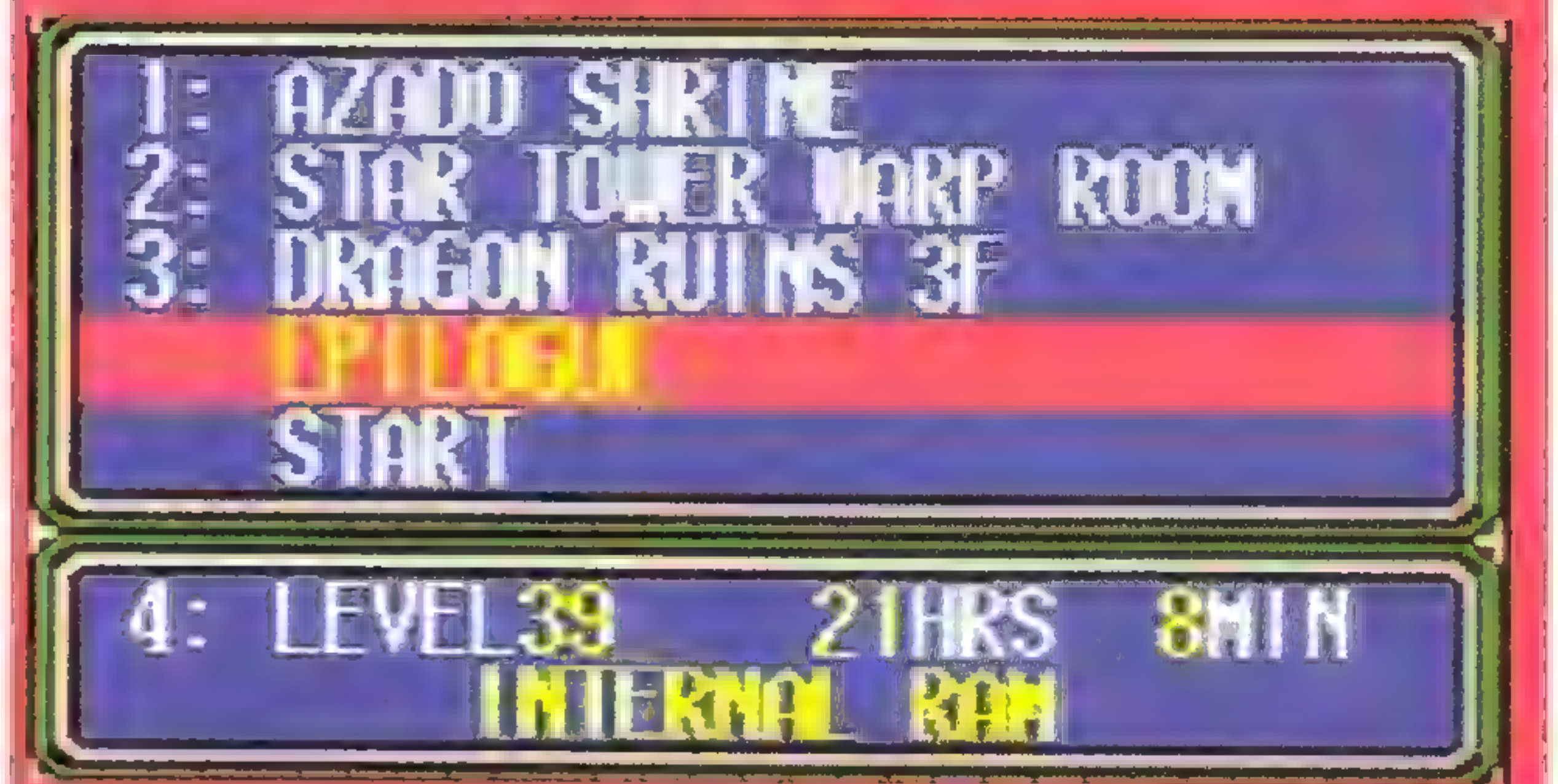
MUTANT CHRONICLES



It's only a matter of time before you'll be able to listen to the voice of Spawn, Lady Death or some other superpower/evil doer while reading along with your favorite comic book. But until that day comes, DigiVision Studios has taken the first step with *Skeema*, an audio CD that plays out like an old-fashioned radio drama. All you have to do is follow the enclosed booklet of unscripted panels while you listen to the sci-fi action unfold. The concept of the *Skeema* audio comic book revolves around an alien world, Niptet, battling a cardacular virus designed to wipe out the male population (created by a deranged female scientist who plans to alter the reproductive systems of women so they no longer need men, get it?). The heroine out to save Niptet is Skeema, a gun-toting, red-haired fem fatale with three—count 'em, three—breasts. The narration is fluid and the production top-notch, with some space-age alternative rock music thrown in for good measure. *Skeema* is currently available in comic book stores. Oh, and did we mention she has three breasts?

DigiVision Studios, 13335 SW.. 42nd
Terrace, Miami, FL, 33175-3940.
skeema@aol.com

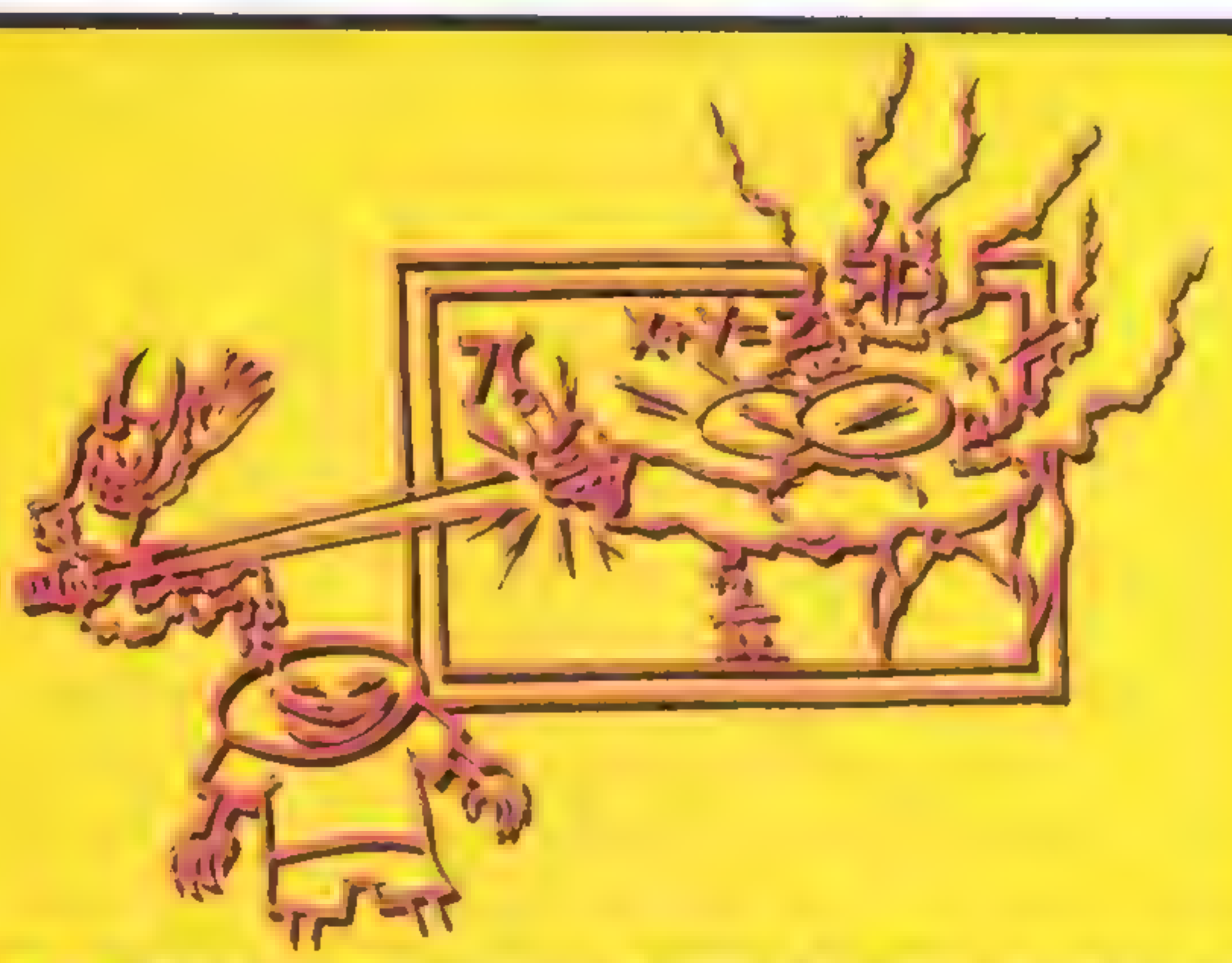
GAME OVER



Think you've conquered the new Sega CD role-playing game *Lunar: Eternal Blue*? Guess again, creampuff. As it turns out, most gamers who finish the contest by beating Zophar are actually still 4-to-6 hours away from seeing the game's real ending! To access the remaining portion of the game, wait until the credits have rolled and the system has re-booted (after you've beaten Zophar, of course). Check your saves and look for an additional slot called "Epilogue." At that point, access the Epilogue save just as you would any other save—and get ready to enjoy the final part of the game. Once the Epilogue has been completed, the story is really over. And speaking of over, *Lunar: Eternal Blue* is Working Designs' last game ever for the waning Sega CD; watch for future WD games to appear on the Sega Saturn.

VAMPI: IN THE FLESH

FLUX's first giveaway station tookthe comic book convention circuit by storm when it appeared at the New York Comic Book Spectacular at the Jacob Javitts Convention Center this past September. We featured four game stations, compliments of Sega, featuring the latest Saturn, 32X and Genesis titles, as well as arm wrestling challanges, dance contests and tons of giveaways including video games, comic books and CDs. Vampirella even stopped by to autograph copies of her sexy pictorial that appeared in FLUX #6. FLUX will also be appearing at the Comic Book Spectacular in Philadelphia this January 12—14. Scheduled guests include Bill Tucci, Andy Kubert, Boris (Sat. only), Amanda Conner, Event Comics' Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, and, of course, Vampirella. For more information, call (908) 788-6845.

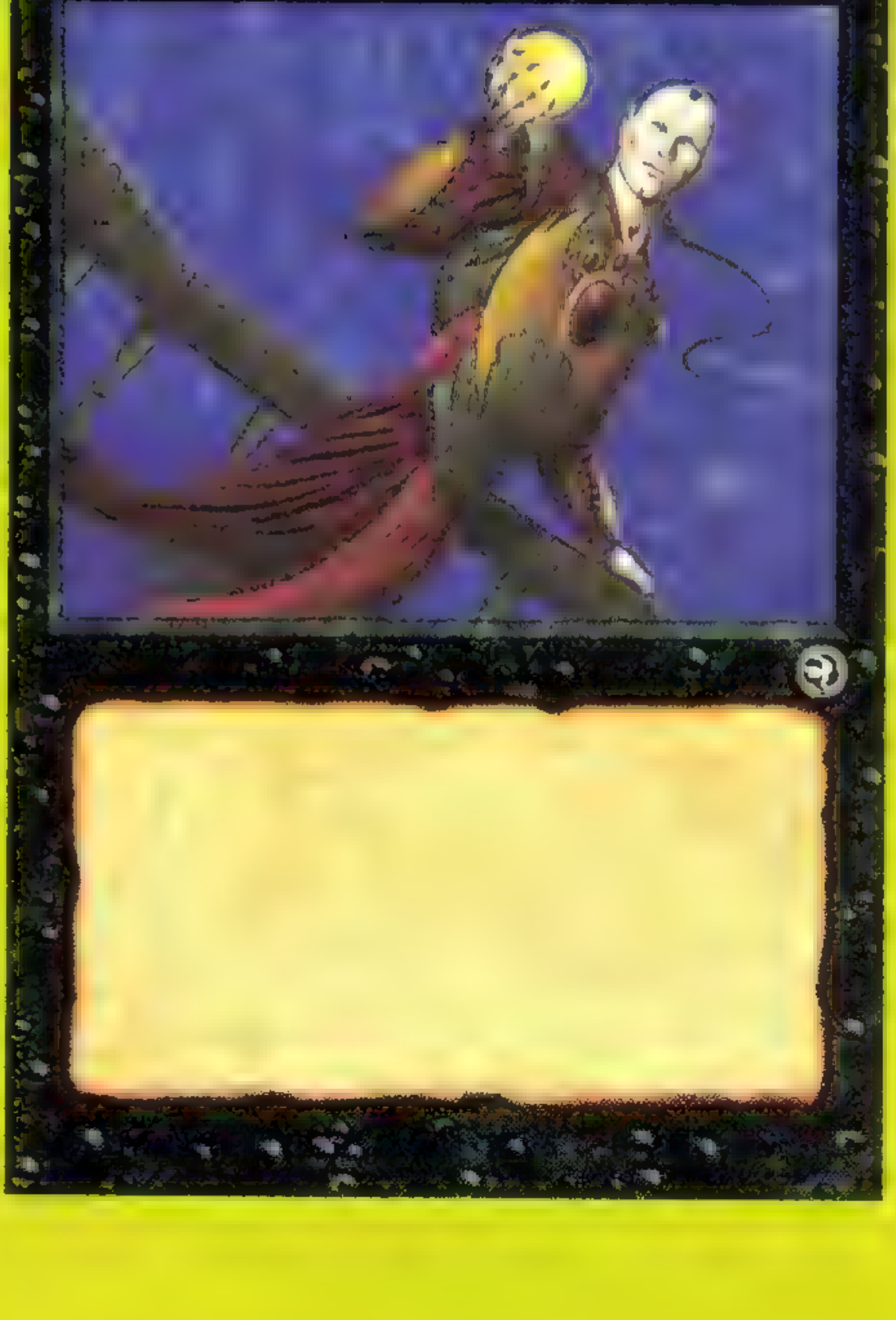


DON'T EVER DO THIS

Never take one of those penlight-like laser pointers and shine it on the teacher's hand while he/she writes on the blackboard. Teacher will become increasingly frustrated after a while and ultimately stop writing on the board. No more notes!

NO PLACE LIKE HOMELANDS

The massive Magic machine keeps gathering steam. In October, Wizards Of The Coast expanded their reign over the collectible card kingdom by unveiling *Homelands*, the latest expansion set for *Magic: The Gathering*. Originally designed as a response to 1994's *Antiquities*, the 140-card *Homelands* set fills in plot points and introduces characters whose names are familiar to *Magic* players but have never appeared on a card—such as Baron Sengir, leader of the formidable Sengir Vampires, who first appeared in the game's original Limited Edition roughly two years ago.



SMASHING TWO HEADS IS BETTER THAN ONE!
THE JURY BELIEVES IN CAPITAL PUNISHMENT!
THE VERDICT IS NO MERCY!
WEB OF CONFUSION!
NO SYMPATHY FOR THE SYMBIOTE!
PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW.
MARVEL COMICS®
Venom®·Spider-Man®
SEPARATION ANXIETY™
VENOM® AND SPIDER-MAN® BURY THE DIGGERS!
FIVE TIMES THE CARNAGE!
NOW ON WINDOWS '95!
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+

Venom® has been violently split from his living costume, spawning five deadly alien Symbiotes. In fierce two-player action, Venom joins forces with arch-enemy, Spider-Man®, to face the new strain of evil brought to life by chilling computer-rendered graphics. Between the merciless Jury and awesome allies like Ghost Rider and Daredevil, Venom's out to part his Symbiote offspring from their newfound life!

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Acclaim
entertainment inc

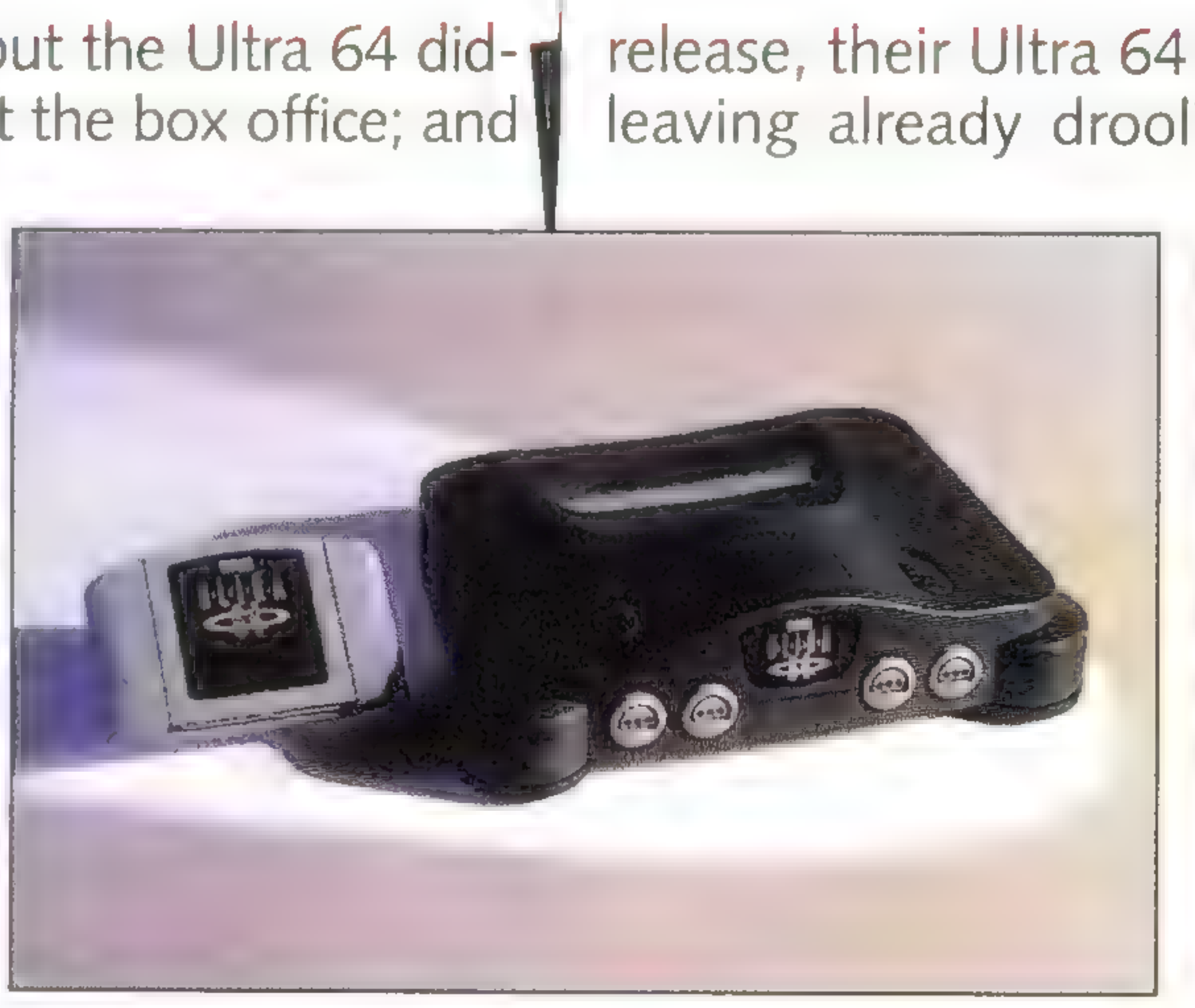
1995 the Year in Review

by Jeff Kitts and Dan Amrich

It was the year the PlayStation came out; but the Ultra 64 didn't. The year *Mortal Kombat* kicked butt at the box office; and *Street Fighter* bombed. It was the year of *DOOM* clones, female comic book heroes and…uhhh…Virtual Boy. FLUX presents a look back at the yar in video games, comics, music, movies, television, trading cards…and Kerri Hoskins.

• ULTRA 64—DELAYED!

While Nintendo promised a pre-Xmas '95 release, their Ultra 64 super-system did not see the light of day, leaving already drooling gamers standing in a puddle of spit over the rumored $250 price tag and the promise of an exact home translation of *Killer Instinct*. And with the big N still unsure whether it wants to go with a cartridge, CD-ROM or optical drive-based system, it could be early next summer before the massive flock of Nintendo sheep get to go *baaaaaaa!!* over the eagerly awaited Ultra 64.



• NIRVANA DRUMMER RETURNS

Little was heard from the surviving Nirvana members after Kurt Cobain used his own head for target practice, at least until drummer David Grohl climbed out from behind his kit, picked up a guitar and recorded the self-titled debut album from the Foo Fighters—1995's best rock record.

• STAR WARS ACTION FIGURES RETURN TO STORE SHELVES

Star Wars action figures returned to toy store shelves thanks to Kenner's (the company responsible for the original 1977 *SW* figures) new Power Of The Force series. The 4-inch figures (slightly taller than the originals) boasted finer detail, more authentic weaponry and lots of extra upper body muscles for Luke and Han. Figures released so far include Darth Vader, Chewbacca, Stormtrooper, R2-D2, Boba Fett and Lando Calrissian among others, with Yoda, TIE Fighter pilot and Luke in Dagobah fatigues coming soon.

• GRETCHEN! GRETCHEN!

MODA
GRETCHEN
STOCKDALE

FLUX got up close and personal with Gretchen Stockdale, former Los Angeles Raider cheerleader and Frederick's Of Hollywood lingerie model who showed off her many talents in Data East's poorly-received *Tattoo Assassins* arcade fighting game. Following her exposure in the pages of FLUX, Ms. Stockdale turned out to be yet another member of O.J. Simpson's harem of criminally-gorgeous white women—and wound up testifying (without the jury) in the trial. And to think, we knew her when....

• SANDMAN, CLARK KENT AND AUNT MAY DIED

Sandman sacrificed himself to the Furies, proving that even the Endless can come to an end. After being found out, Supes hastily retired his mild-mannered alterego. And Spidey's Aunt May just got old. How better to note their passing than with sparkle-enhanced and die-cut covers?

• GOOD DOGGIE

The FLUX Dog became America's favorite mascot and video game critic, pissing, licking and humping his way into the hearts of readers everywhere.

• VAN HALEN BLOWS

Van Halen released yet another lukewarm, pussy-rock album, *Balance*. Geez, does anybody remember when these guys used to play with fire and passion? What happened?

• WINDOWS '95 DEBUTS

Amazingly, Windows '95 debuted in time for its name. And while it's been making DOS gamers' lives a living hell, it should—in due time—revolutionize the PC gaming world.

• PAMELA ANDERSON WEDS

Sadness rocked the mental capacities of fanboys everywhere when Busty *Baywatch* Babe Pamela Anderson got hitched (on the beach in a white bikini...oooh) to Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee. First Heather Locklear, now Pamela Anderson—Tommy, you're the king.

• FLUX EDITORS MARRY (!)

In the ultimate display of geekdom, FLUX Executive Editor Jeff Kitts and Managing Editor Dan Amrich both got married (to different girls, pervert) on the same day. Remember, people, proper etiquette dictates that sending gifts within a year of the big day *is* socially acceptable, so hurry on down to your local mall.

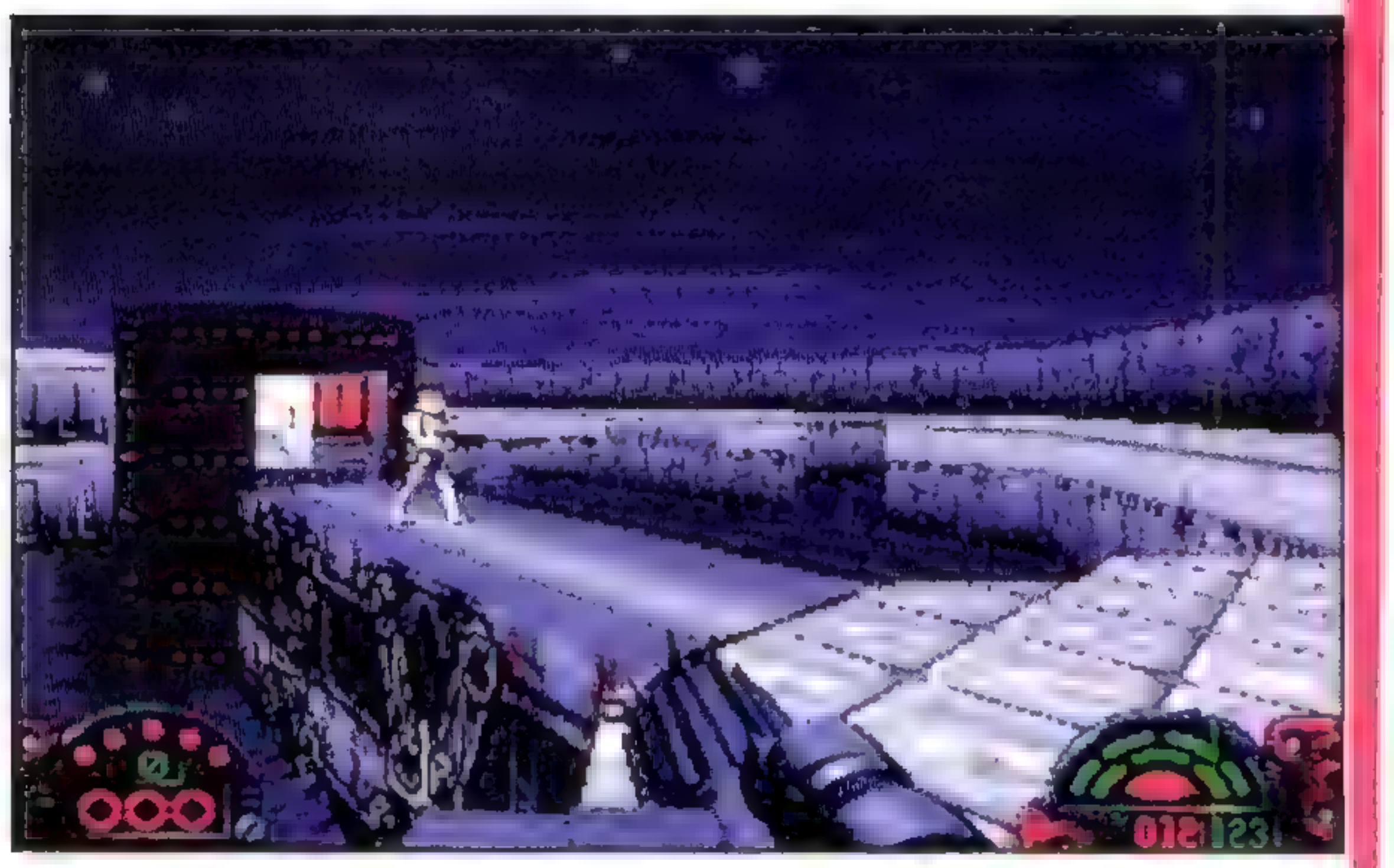
• SEGA SATURN SURFACES

Despite gamers' widespread disgust over the crappy Genesis 32X add-on, response to the Sega Saturn was positive right from the system's early springtime '95 release. First wave games like *Virtua Fighter*, *Worldwide Soccer* and

Daytona USA proved that the hardware was a genuine contender for the 32-bit crown, and recent entries like the *outstanding World Series Baseball* and *Virtua Fighter Remix* continue to increase the Saturn's overall value. Finally, Sega lived up to their own hype.

• 3-D GAMES TAKE OVER

DOOM clones became the new rage. Between *Dark Forces* (PC/Mac), *Zero Tolerance* (Genesis), *Demolition Man* (3DO), *Rise Of The Triad* (PC), *Heretic* (PC) and *Alien Vs. Predator* (Jaguar), gamers discovered new thrills in walking down dark, 3-dimensional halls, blasting monsters to bloody bits and running for the toilet clutching their queasy stomachs.



• ALAN MOORE GETS CHUMMY WITH IMAGE

Moore did brilliant work on *Swamp Thing*, *Miracleman*, *V For Vendetta*, *Watchmen*...and now, after a successful guest shot on *Spawn*, he's penning wonky tripe like *WildC.A.T.s* and *Violator Vs. Badrock*. What's comicdom's most celebrated scribe *thinking*? I guess a trunkful of industry awards don't pay the rent.

• VAMPI BUSTS OUT

After a lengthy search, Harris Comics found themselves a new Vampirella spokeswoman. We're not allowed to tell you her name, but we can tell you her measurements: 34-23-34. Yowza.

• VIRTUAL BOY ARRIVES

Thirty-two bits of power, four shades of red.

• PENTHOUSE COMIX EXEC LEAPS TO DEATH

Former *Penthouse Comix* Editor-In-Chief George S. Carragonne made a major impact on the comics scene when he committed suicide on July 20 by hurling himself off the 45th floor balcony (500 feet!) inside the Marriott Marquis hotel in New York City. Brutal.

• ELIZABETH BERKLEY BARES ALL

Showgirls hit theaters nationwide with an NC-17 rating, and despite the thrill of seeing former *Saved By The Bell* babe Elizabeth Berkley naked for 90 minutes, FLUX Executive Editor Jeff Kitts branded the flick "The Worst Movie Ever Made...Next To *Boxing Helena*."

• HERO BITES THE DUST

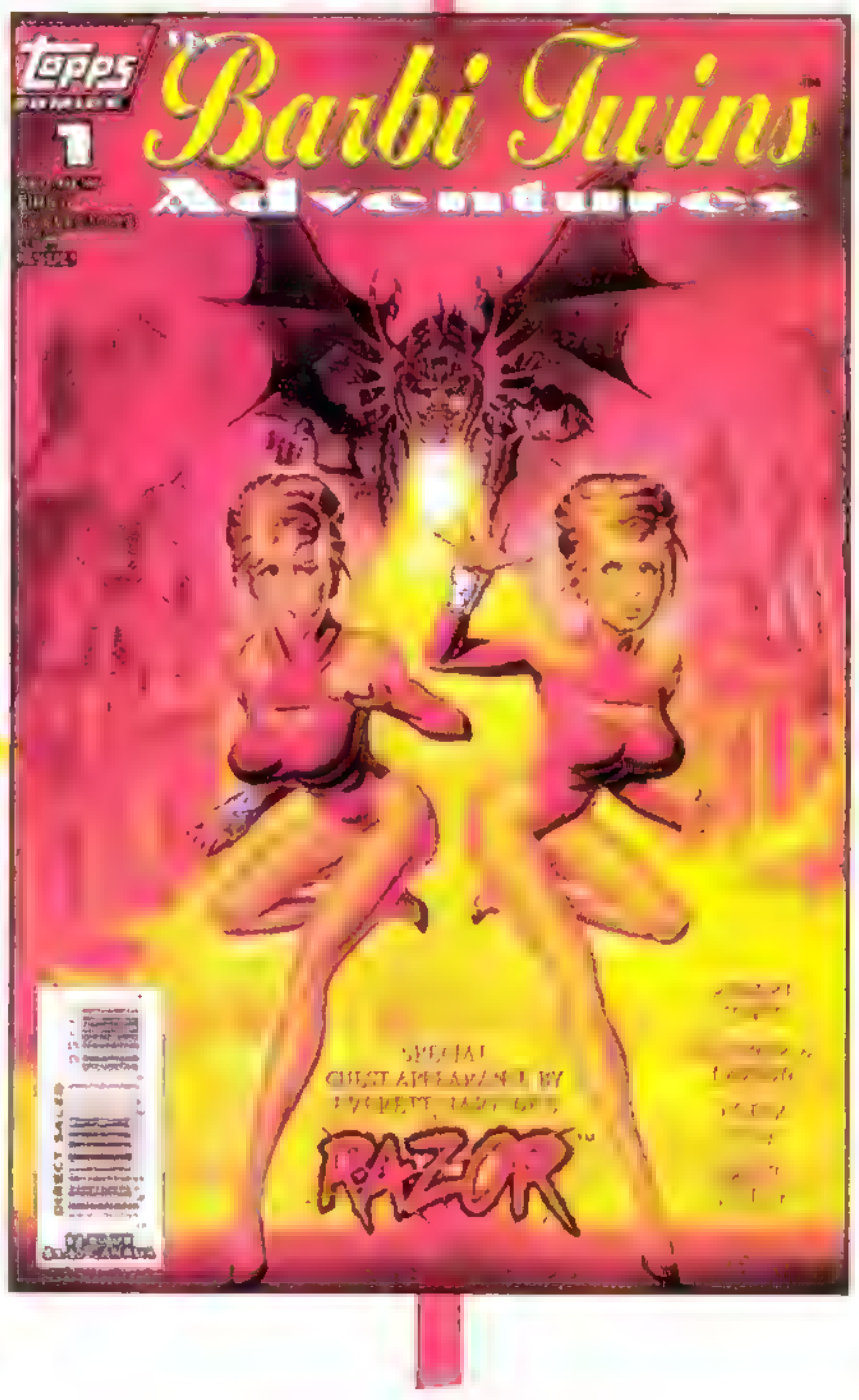
Hero Illustrated bowed out of the print publishing game and took their little comic magazine online. One down, one to go!

• PC GAMERS BATTLE HEAD-TO-HEAD

With PC games like *NASCAR Racing*, *Virtual Pool*, *Descent*, *Rise Of The Triad*, *Terminal Velocity* and *Mortal Kombat 3*, head-to-head modem play took computer gaming to new levels of excitement. It's amazing how much more powerful you feel when you embarrass another human from another state.

• BARBI TWINS ENTER COMICDOM

The Barbi Twins got their own comic book from Topps. Nothing else to report here—we'll take any excuse to run more Barbi Twins art.


Topps Comics
1
Barbi Twins Adventures
Special guest appearance by Everett Hartsoe's
RAZOR

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• THE X-FILES ABDUCTS FRIDAY NIGHTS

Vampires, reincarnation, extraterrestrials, telepathy, conspiracies—it's all in a day's work for FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, the believer and the skeptic, who investigate some weird thing or another every Friday night, despite the government's attempts to stop them from finding the truth. The strangest *X-Files* occurrence to date? People watching FOX.

• 3DO HITS $299

Trip Hawkins' 32-bit megamachine hit the magic $300 price point this summer and quickly started outselling the just-released Saturn in some areas. Now normal people can enjoy hits like *Road Rash* and *Return Fire*. And it's a great deal—unless you were one of the schmucks who initially bought one for $700....

• THE BIGGEST MYSTERIES OF THE YEAR —NICOLE BROWN'S SLAYING AND MONTGOMERY BURNS' ASSASSINATION—BOTH INVOLVED SIMPSONS

The official explanation was that little Maggie accidentally shot Mr. Burns...but...well, is it me, or does Dr. Hibbert look suspiciously like O.J.?

• MORTAL KOMBAT HIT THE BIG SCREEN—HARD

Unlike *Double Dragon*, the *MK* movie was #1 for three weeks and grossed more than $70 million. Unlike *Street Fighter*, *MK* had a cool plot that both made sense and stayed true to the game. And even without an R rating, the flick delivered plenty of fantastic fights and even a few fatalities.

• POCAHONTAS ALTERED HISTORY AND MADE A KILLING

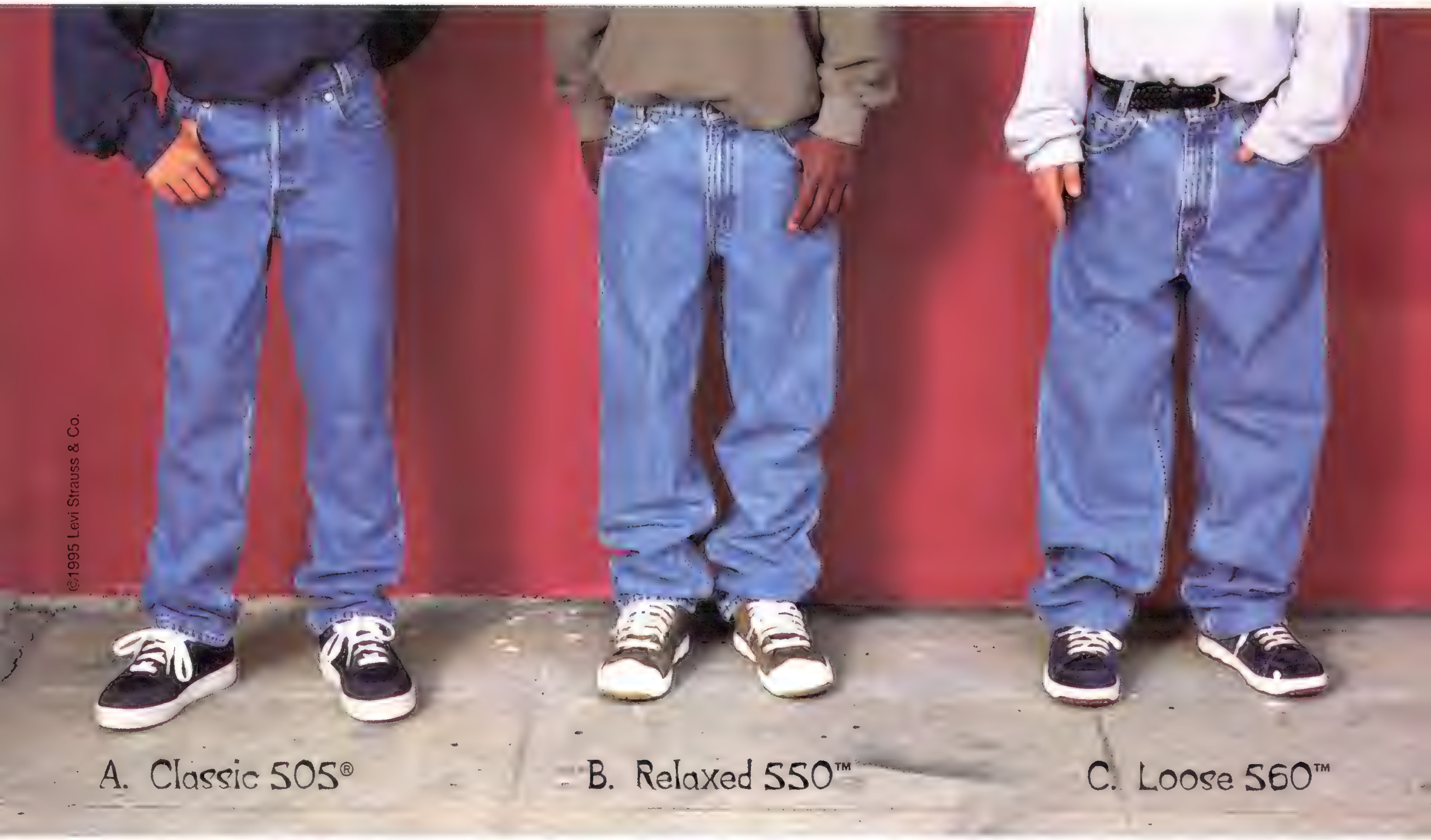
In the Disney version, raccoons scamper, trees sing and love conquers all. In true history, Poca was 12 and John Smith was about 30. After she flung herself on him to stop his execution, he returned to England sick, and she followed some years later—married to another settler, believing Smith to be dead. But he wasn't. And they lived unhappily ever after.

1.

2.

3.

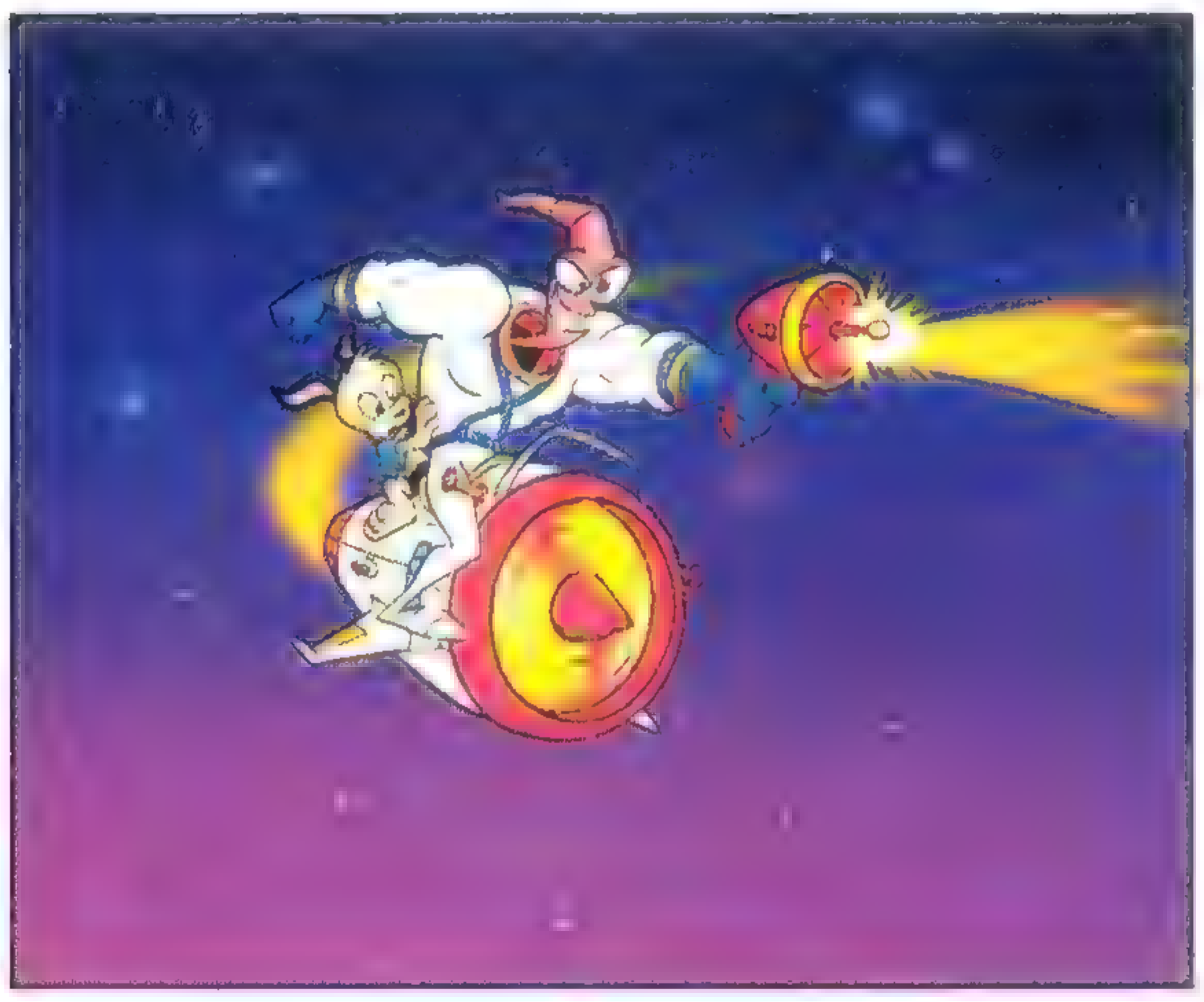
Can you match the dogs with the fit of the jeans?


A. Classic 505®
B. Relaxed 550™
C. Loose 560™

©1995 Levi Strauss & Co.

LEVI'S

Hint: Levi's® 505® jeans are cut to give you a little room to move. Levi's 550™ jeans have a lot more room. And Levi's 560™ jeans have room inside for you plus three yapping Chihuahuas, not that you'd like that sort of thing.



• EARTHWORM JIM SLITHERED INTO THE SATURDAY MORNING LINEUP

The early bird can catch Jim, Princess What's-Her-Name, Psy-Crow, Snott and the rest of the *EWJ* posse every Saturday morning on the WB this season. It's just a shame that it's scheduled against FOX's big blue juggernaut, *The Tick*.

• BAD GIRLS TAKE OVER COMIX

Following footsteps and D-cups of Vampirella and Lady Death, hot chicks with weapons and/or attitudes—Glory, Dawn, Lady Rawhide, Avengylene—started popping up and popping out in comics everywhere.

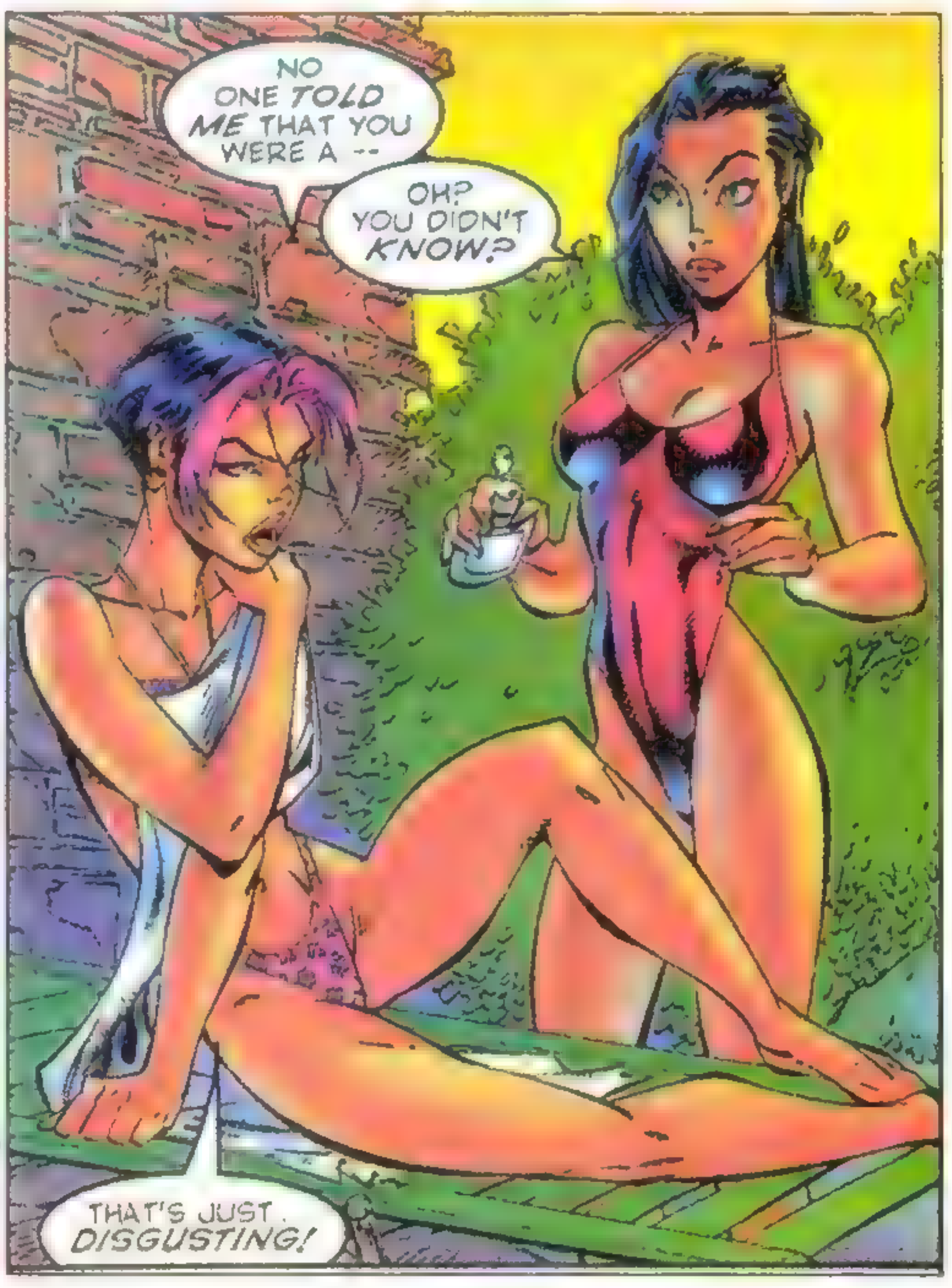
• THE PLAYSTATION BECOMES A CONTENDER

The early Saturn release didn't faze Sony a bit, and the Ultra 64 delay only helped their plans. The PlayStation hit shelves on schedule in September, priced lower than Sega's machine and armed with great games like *Battle Arena Toshinden* and *Ridge Racer*. And then there were three....

• WATERWORLD SANK

Weathering bad press, internal struggles and a price tag that could have sent each and every FLUX reader to college, Kevin Costner's titanic epic about a soggy, postapocalyptic Earth opened to less than wave reviews.

• SARAH RAINMAKER: OUT OF THE CLOSET


NO ONE TOLD ME THAT YOU WERE A --
OH? YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
THAT'S JUST DISGUSTING!

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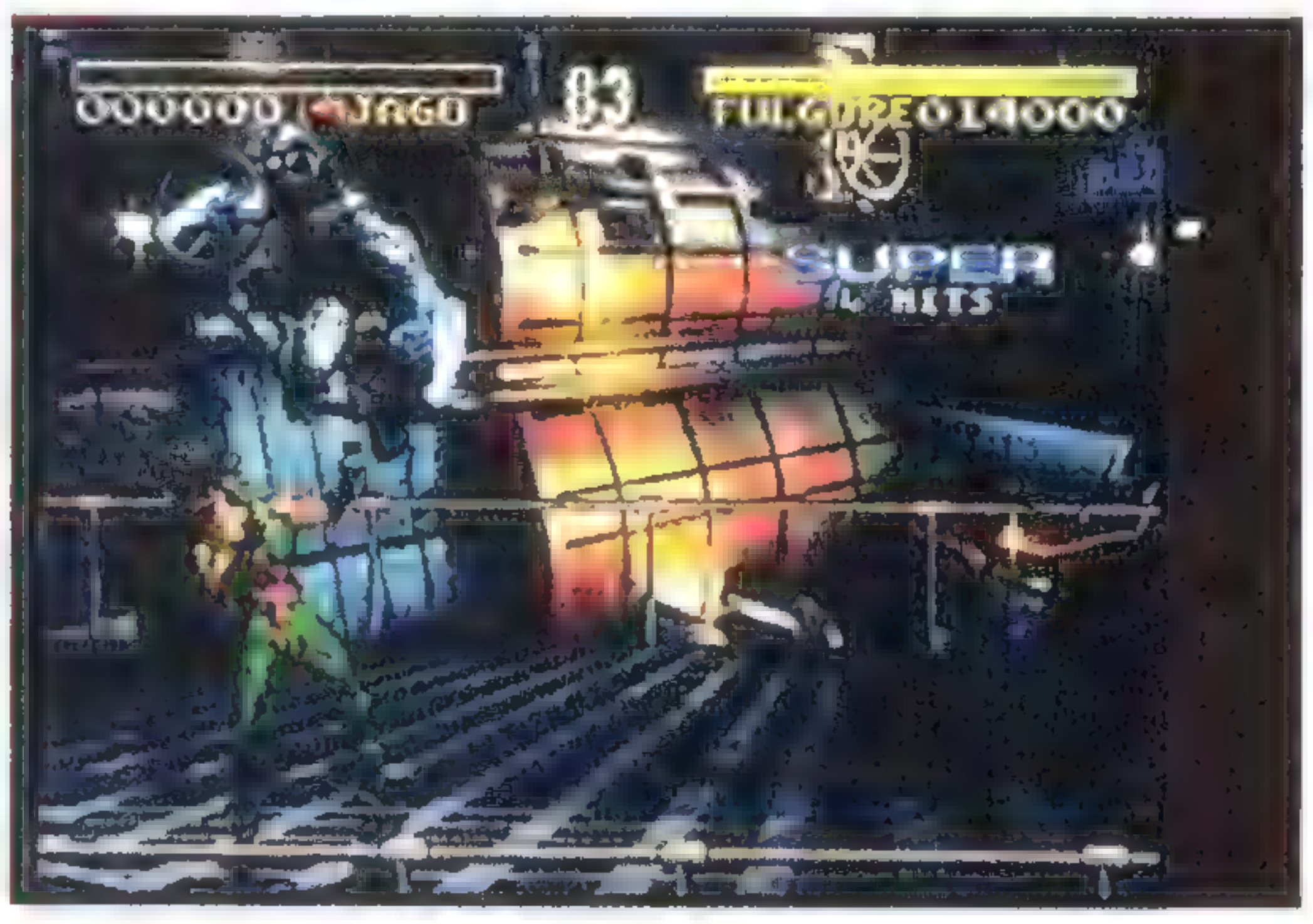
In the middle of a steamy swimsuit scene, *Gen 13*'s Native American beauty effectively threw a bucket of cold, cold water on male readers when she announced her lesbianism. It'll make for some interesting plotlines from here on out, of course, but stilll...*brrr*.

• KILLER INSTINCT AND MORTAL KOMBAT 3: HOMEWARD BOUND

Nintendo brought a watered-down but highly enjoyable version of *KI* to the SNES (but, alas, not the Ultra), while Williams handled the six translations of *MK3*—the first of the *MK* series to hit home while its coin-op counterpart was still #1 on the charts.

• THE 16-BIT CRASH

When the new 32-bit guys moved in, the old 16-bit guard moved out—to dump bins marked "Clearance." As a result, there are some excellent SNES and Genesis titles out there in the used and discount sections of software and toy stores that you can have for a song. Get 'em before 16-bit gaming truly is a thing of the past.



• MAGIC: THE GATHERING SOLD; POGS DIDN'T

If you had a choice between beautifully-painted trading cards with names like "Rashka The Slayer," "Animate Dead" and "Torture" that could be used in a game of magic and mayhem, or little dorky cardboard discs that could be used in a glorified game of Tiddlywinks, which would you buy?

• KERRI HOSKINS

What do *NBA Jam*, *Revolution X* and *MK3* all have in common? A golden-haired goddess named Kerri Hoskins, who quickly became the object of all gamers' desires after her sexy photo spread in FLUX #5. Drool all you want, fanboys; we've got her home phone number.

• REBOOT AND TOY STORY REVOLUTIONIZE ANIMATION

ABC's Saturday-morning series *Reboot* proved that rendered animation had come of age; Disney's feature-length *Toy Story* made it fun for the whole family. And art imitates, um, art: Disney's *Toy Story* cart is out, while EA is working on a *Reboot* game.

Meet Kano, man without mercy. Watch out for his daggers. Look out for his knives. He's too strong to stop and too mean to die. And you know the really scary part? He's back and he's coming to your house. MK3. Now on Super NES®, Game Boy®, Game Gear™ & Sega Genesis™.

HE'S WANTED IN 35 COUNTRIES.
THE POLICE CAN'T CATCH HIM.
THE MILITARY CAN'T KILL HIM.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN?

MORTAL KOMBAT 3. BE [illegible] HOME.

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knightlife:

A Guide To Role-Playing Video Games

by Zach Meston

Can't tell one role-playing video game from the next? Join us in our quest to determine the best RPGs for Genesis, SNES, Sega CD, Saturn and PlayStation

There are as many definitions of RPGs as there are ways to snuff cats, but for the purposes of this article, we'll limit ourselves to games in which you control a character or group of characters, with numerical statistics (hit points, strength, dexterity, bladder control, and so on) that fluctuate as you hack and slash your way through some epic quest.

The RPGs in this best-of feature are more closely related to the paper-and-pencil RPGs (like Dungeon & Dragons) that inspired the genre back in the early Eighties. Just remember: after these games, there's nowhere to go but down....

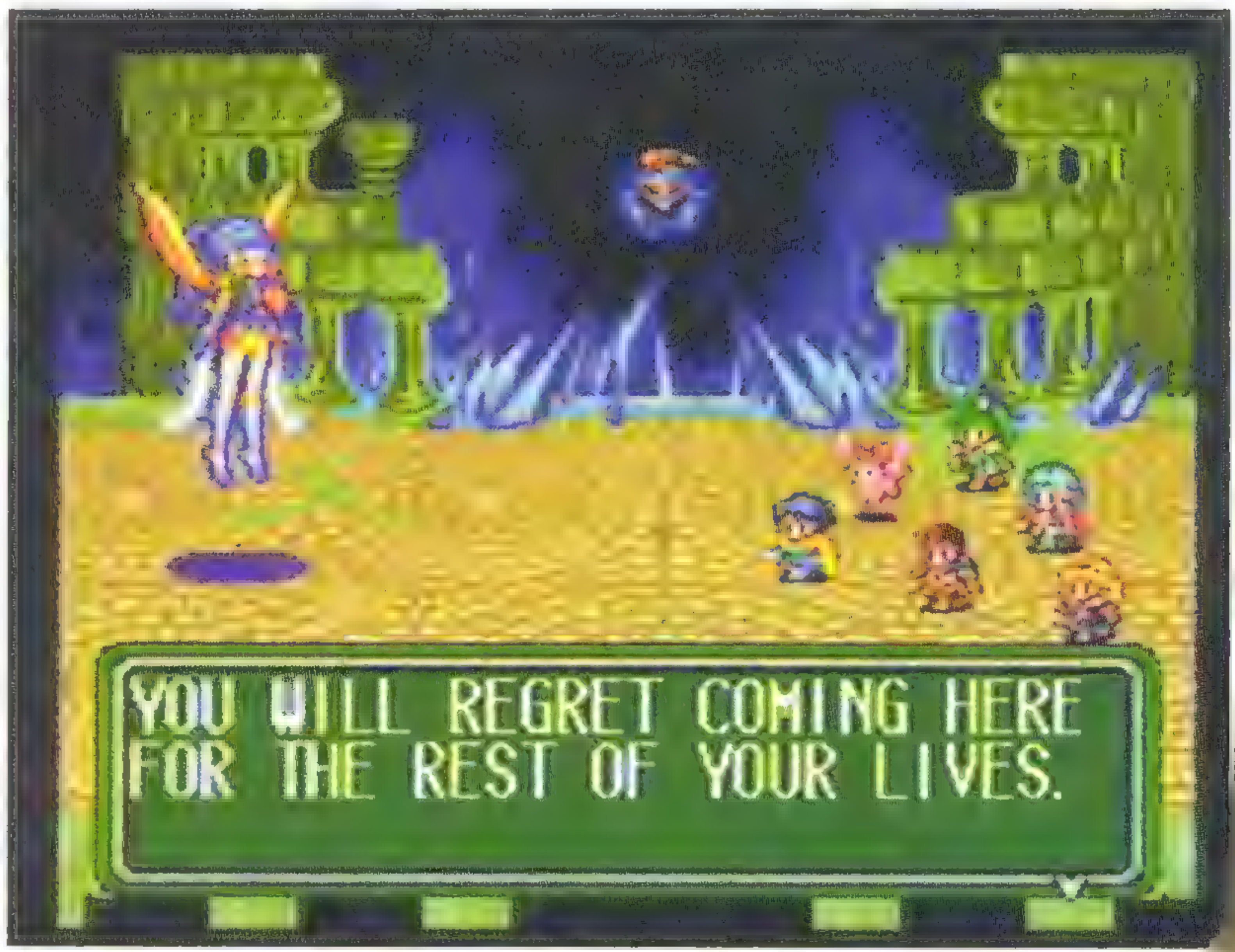
Final Fantasy III
(SNES, SquareSoft)

In Japan, RPGs are the best-selling genre of video games—Japanese youths often cut school on the days that highly anticipated RPGs are released. One of the most popular Japanese RPG series is Final Fantasy series from SquareSoft, which also has quite the cult following in the States. Final Fantasy III is the biggest and best FF of them all, with an astounding 16 characters to discover and control, along with graphics and sound that wouldn't seem out of place on a 32-bit system. The storyline, while quite detailed, is a tad droll, and frequently ends up in locations you don't normally see in RPGs, like an opera house and a haunted train.

Lunar: The Silver Star & Lunar: Eternal Blue
(Sega CD, Working Designs)

It's pretty much safe to say that the large majority of games for the Sega CD are better used as drink coasters than entertainment, but there are exceptions: namely, Lunar: The Silver Star and Lunar: Eternal Blue, two RPGs from Working Designs.

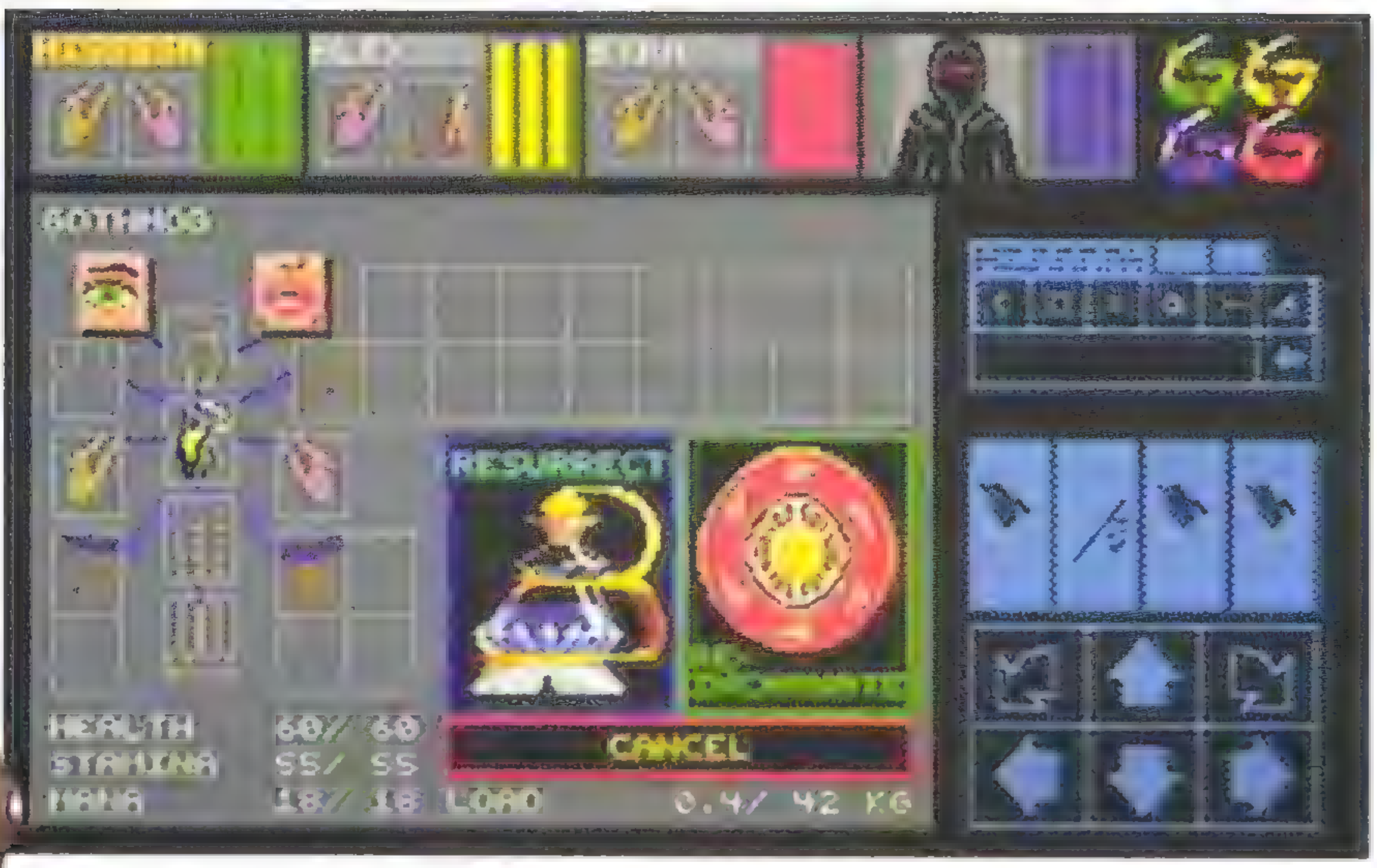
Working Designs has a unique formula for success: It licenses the hottest Japanese RPGs and translates them into English while adding heaps of humor in the form of pop-culture references, bad jokes and sexual innuendo. This goofy approach offends those RPG purists who want their translations 100% faithful, but it also makes the Lunar series the most accessible RPGs on the market. Both Lunars are equally hilarious, but Lunar: Eternal Blue has more detailed gameplay and more animation.



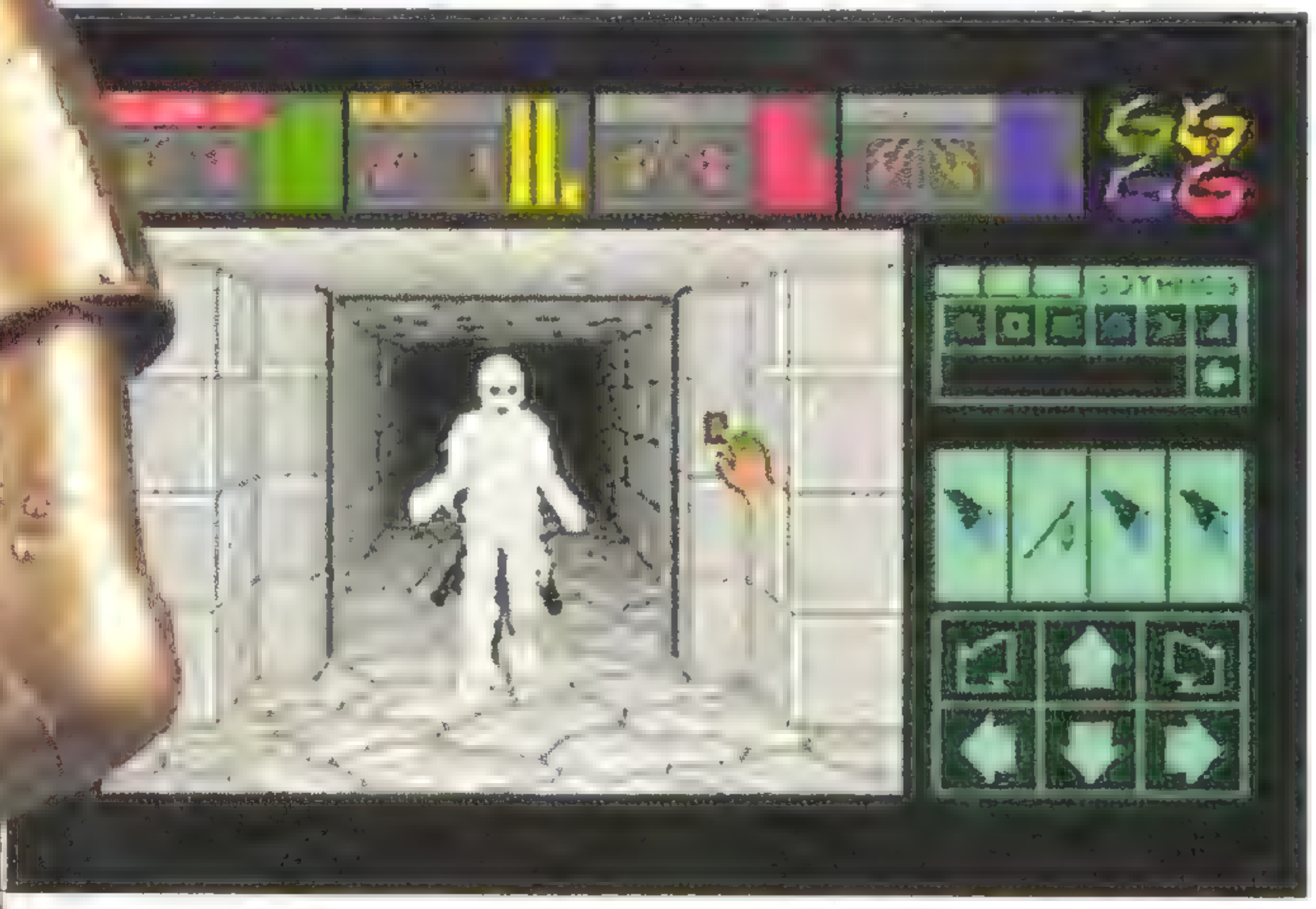
YOU WILL REGRET COMING HERE
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES.

Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep
C CD-ROM Interplay)

In 1986, a tiny San Diego company called FTL (Faster Than Light) released an RPG for the Atari ST computer that changed the genre forever. It was called Dungeon Master, and it was an RPG with astounding graphics (at least for its

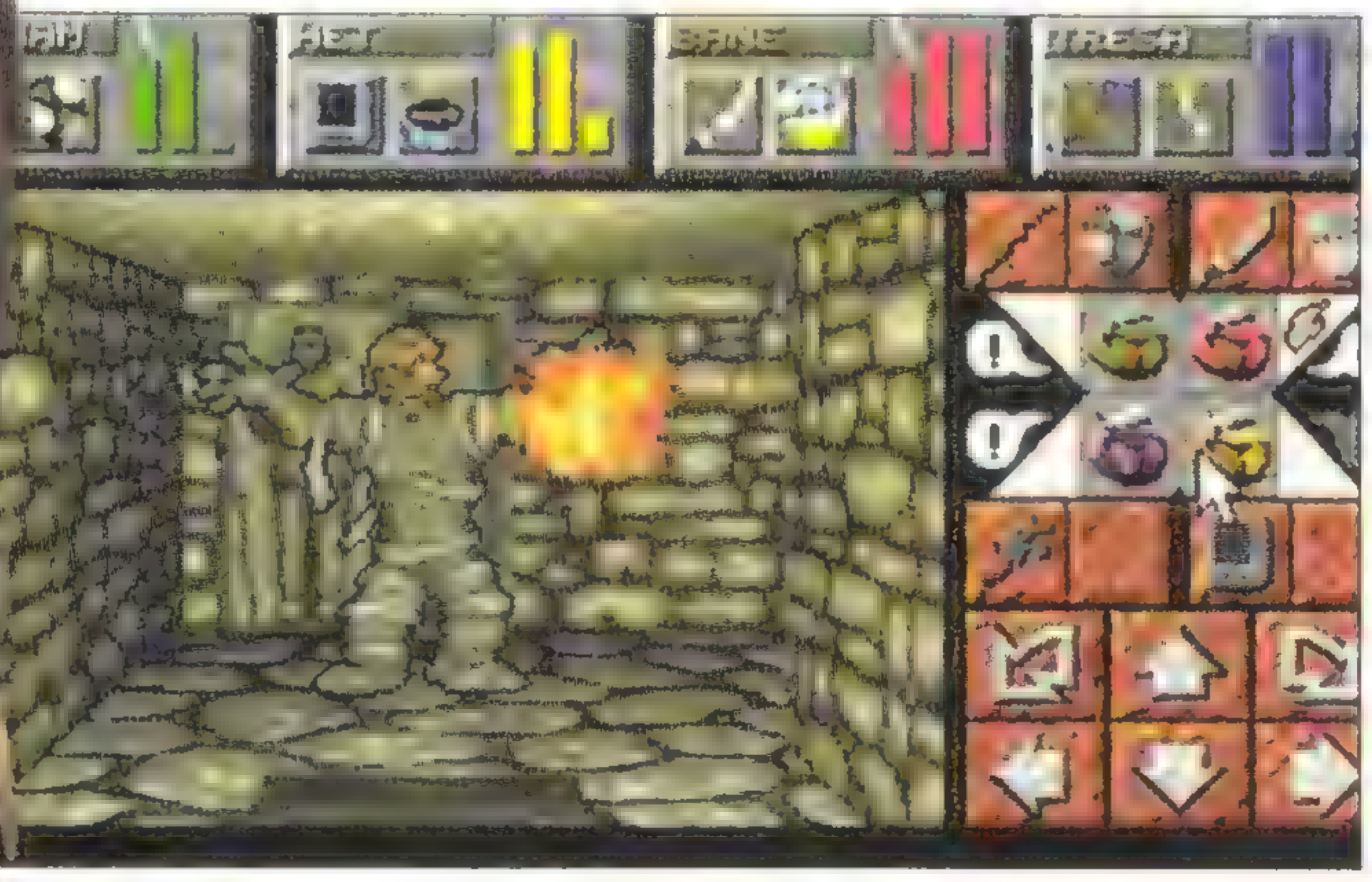


day) and the most devious puzzles ever devised. The most amazing aspect of Dungeon Master was that it all took place in real time, particularly the combat against the dungeon creatures. Previous RPGs (and even most RPGs today) used "turn-based" combat in which the player

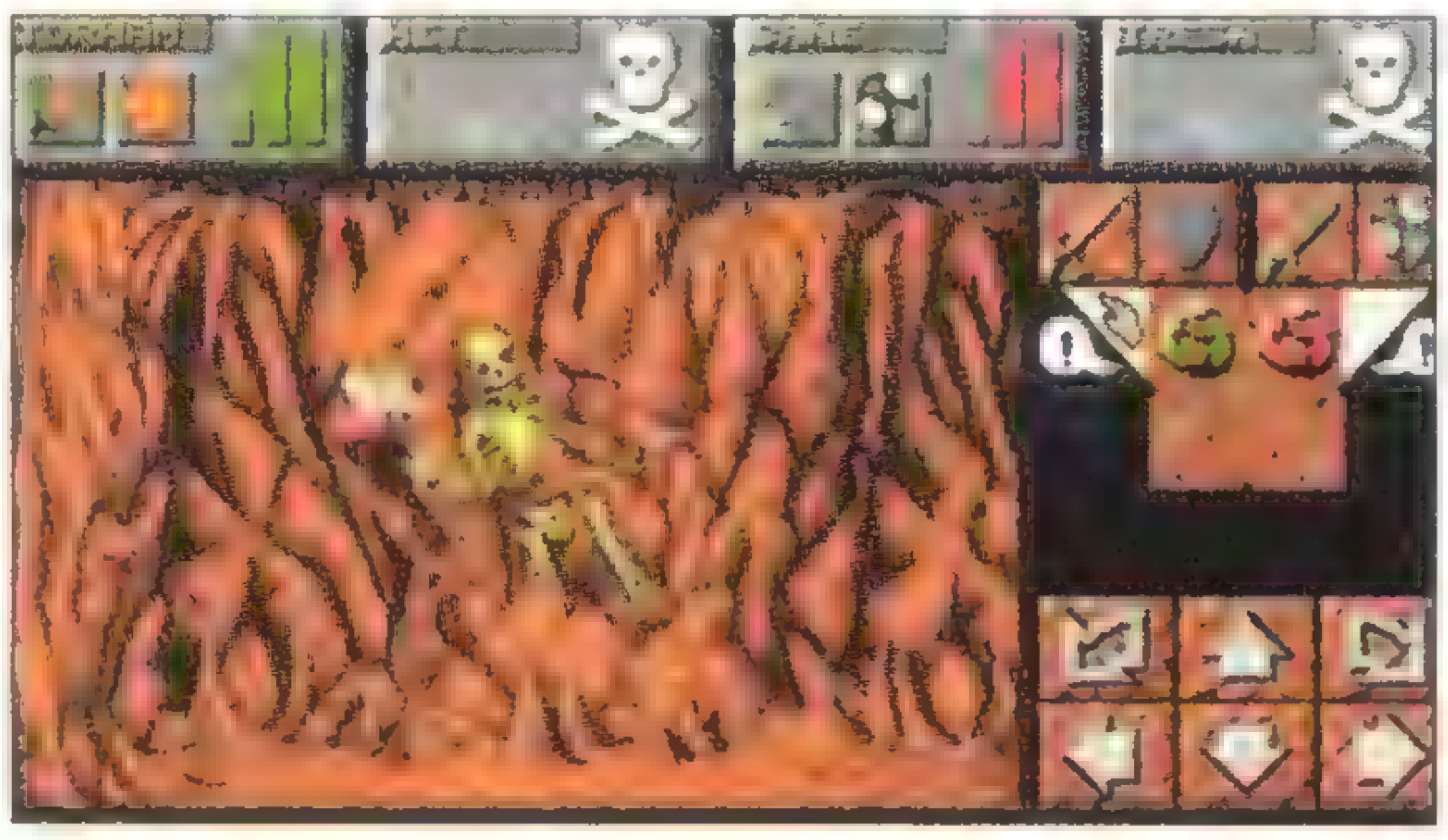


leisurely chose the actions of his adventuring party and then watched the results; Dungeon Master forced the player to move, use weapons, and cast spells all while avoiding being smooshed by attacking creatures.

After spending most of the late Eighties and early Nineties porting Dungeon



Master to every system under the sun, FTL finally got around to kicking out the sequel last year. While it's definitely



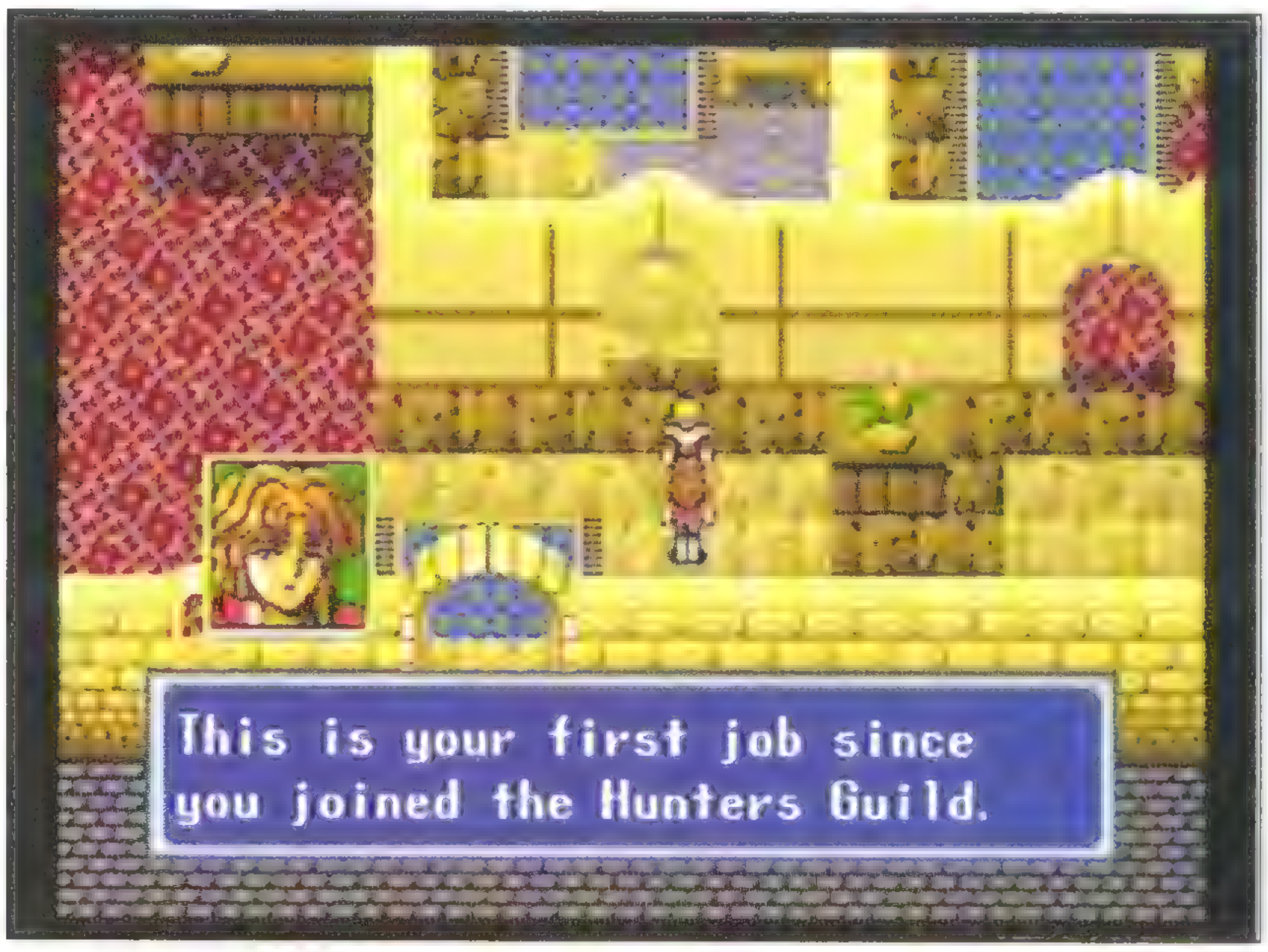
dated-looking when compared to The Elder Scrolls: Arena or Stonekeep, Dungeon Master II has oodles of that all-important ingredient called gameplay. Hell, it's worth a

peek just to see the sequel to one of the best RPGs ever.

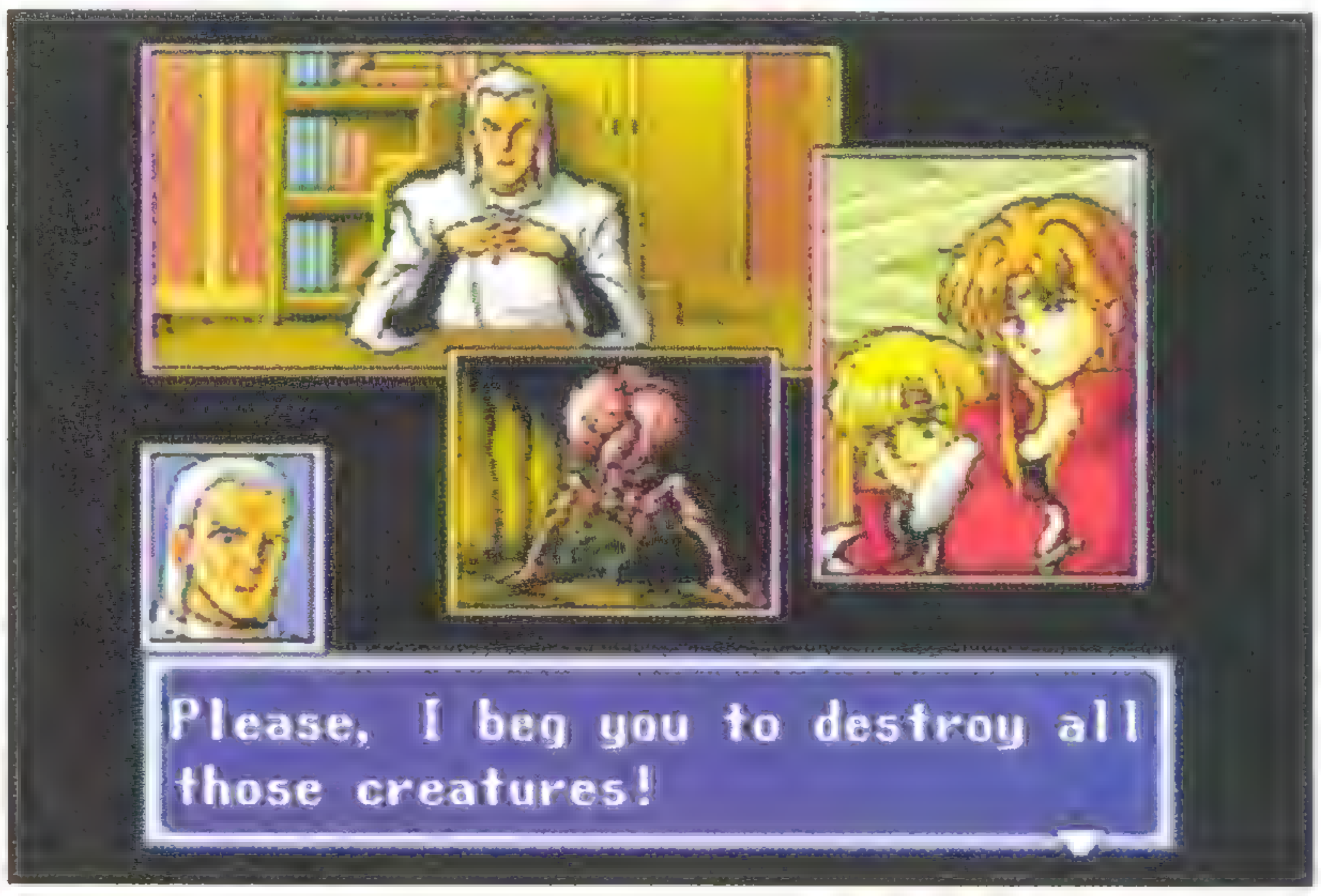
Phantasy Star II, III & IV

(Genesis, Sega)

Back in the late Eighties, Nintendo and its NES were kicking the booty of Sega and its Master System, but Sega didn't go down without a fight. One of the best Master System games was an RPG called Phantasy Star, which featured a first-person view of the action and some nifty battle graphics. Sega continued the series on the slightly more popular Genesis with Phantasy Star II, still widely considered to be an all-time classic. A few years later came PS III, which had the gimmick of multiple paths through the adventure, but didn't have the fun factor of part deux. Phantasy Star IV had excellent gameplay



This is your first job since you joined the Hunters Guild.



Please, I beg you to destroy all those creatures!

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way too expensive for most gamers. All in all, the Phantasy Stars are still the best Genesis RPGs that ever was and will be.

Stonekeep
(PC CD-ROM, Interplay)

Stonekeep is a perfect example of why RPGs are few and far between for computer gamers these days: They take lots of time and money to produce—five years in the case of Stonekeep—and don't sell in the range of cater-to-Joe-Blow games like Myst. Stonekeep surely deserves to sell bucketloads, though; it's a first-person adventure with fantastic digitized characters, a wonderful interface and fourteen intricate dungeon levels to explore. If you remember the classic 1986 computer RPG Dungeon Master, consider Stonekeep as its worthy successor.

The RPGs Of Tomorrow

- Arc The Lad (PlayStation, Sony Of Japan): It's much too short, but drop-dead gorgeous. Problem is, Sony hates RPGs, so this game might never be brought over to the U.S.
- Dungeon KeepeR (PC CD-ROM, Bullfrog): This isn't truly an RPG, but it has an awesome gameplay twist that pokes fun at the usual RPG situation. Instead of controlling a group of adventurers foraging into a dungeon, you control the dungeon itself, positioning the monsters and traps to keep the good guys from getting to you.
- The Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall (PC CD-ROM, Bethesda Softworks): This is the sequel to 1993's The Elder Scrolls: Arena, which had ground-breaking graphics and a massive game world. Daggerfall looks even prettier and should have even more terrain to explore, since Arena was on floppy disks and Daggerfall can utilize the space of a CD-ROM.
- Lunar: The Director's Cut (Saturn, Working Designs): This Saturnized version of Lunar will have several features left out of the Sega CD original, along with spiffy 32-bit graphics and sound.

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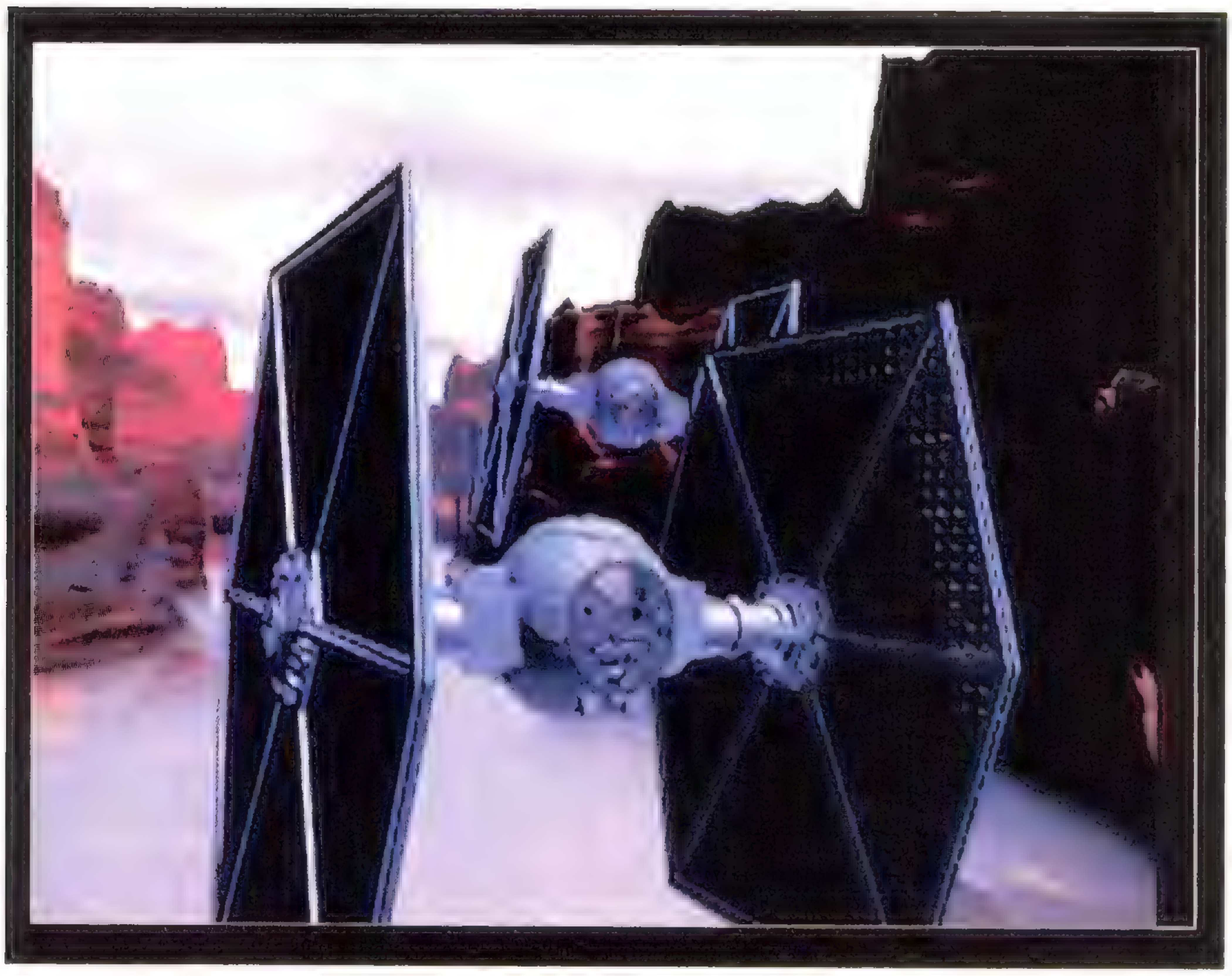
Using The Force:

LucasArts goes back to basics and reinvents the interactive movie with the long-awaited PC monster *Rebel Assault II*

by Mark East



A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, LucasArts created an interactive gaming experience that tied in so well with the Star Wars trilogy, that some speculated the next *Star Wars* movie would be interactive. Well, from what George Lucas tells us, that is not the case—but the long-awaited *Rebel Assault II* could almost be considered a sequel, not to its predecessor, but to the motion picture series itself. It plays out just like a good *Star Wars* movie should. Good guys, bad guys, blaster fights, droids, shiny black helmets and all. It even begins and ends exactly like a *Star Wars* movie.

Make no mistake, though, this is not *Star Wars*. "When I started *Rebel II*, instead of starting with a story and building a game into it, I wanted to do it the other way around," says Project Leader Vince Lee. "With the first *Rebel*, we were very story-oriented. It followed *Star Wars* quite a bit,

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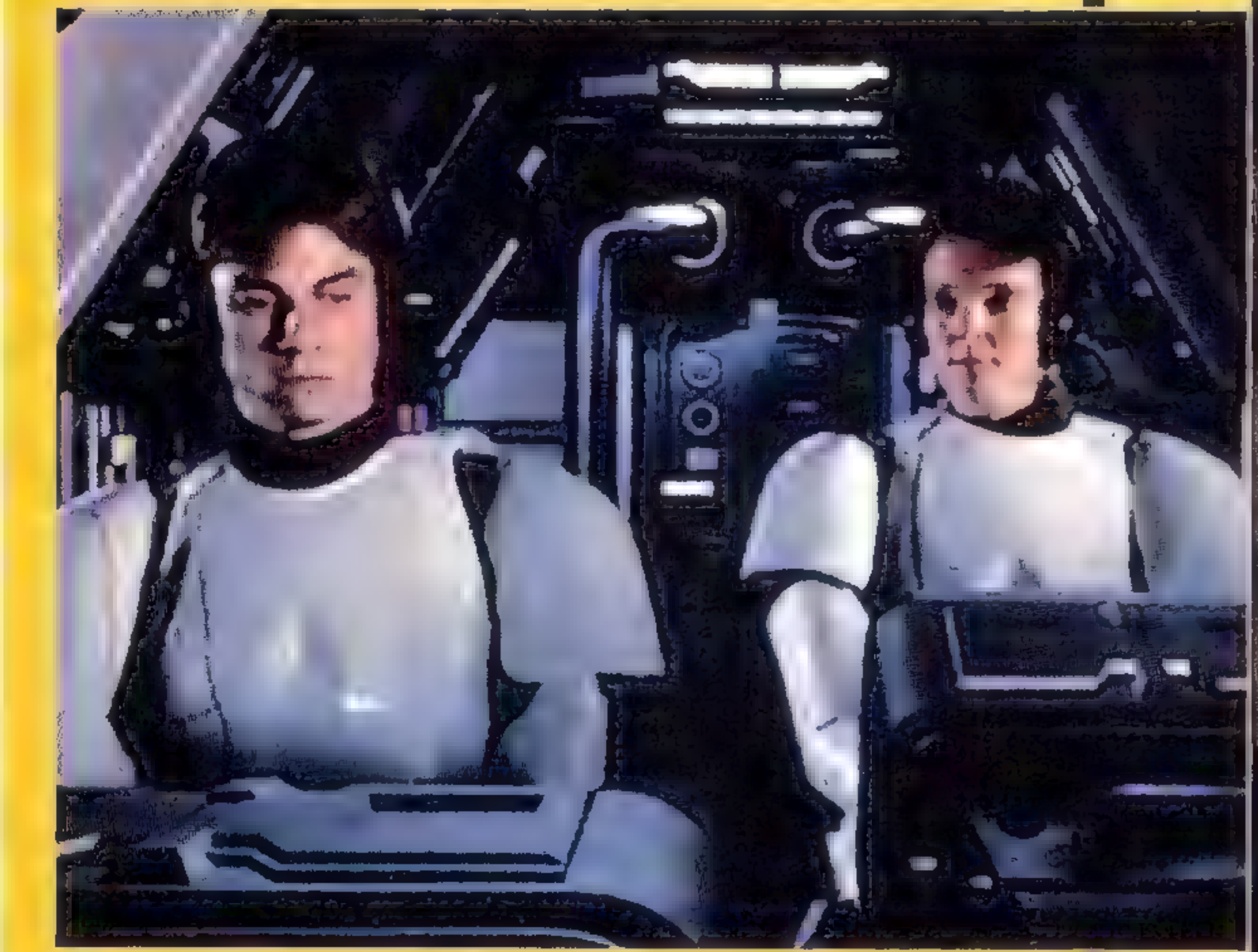
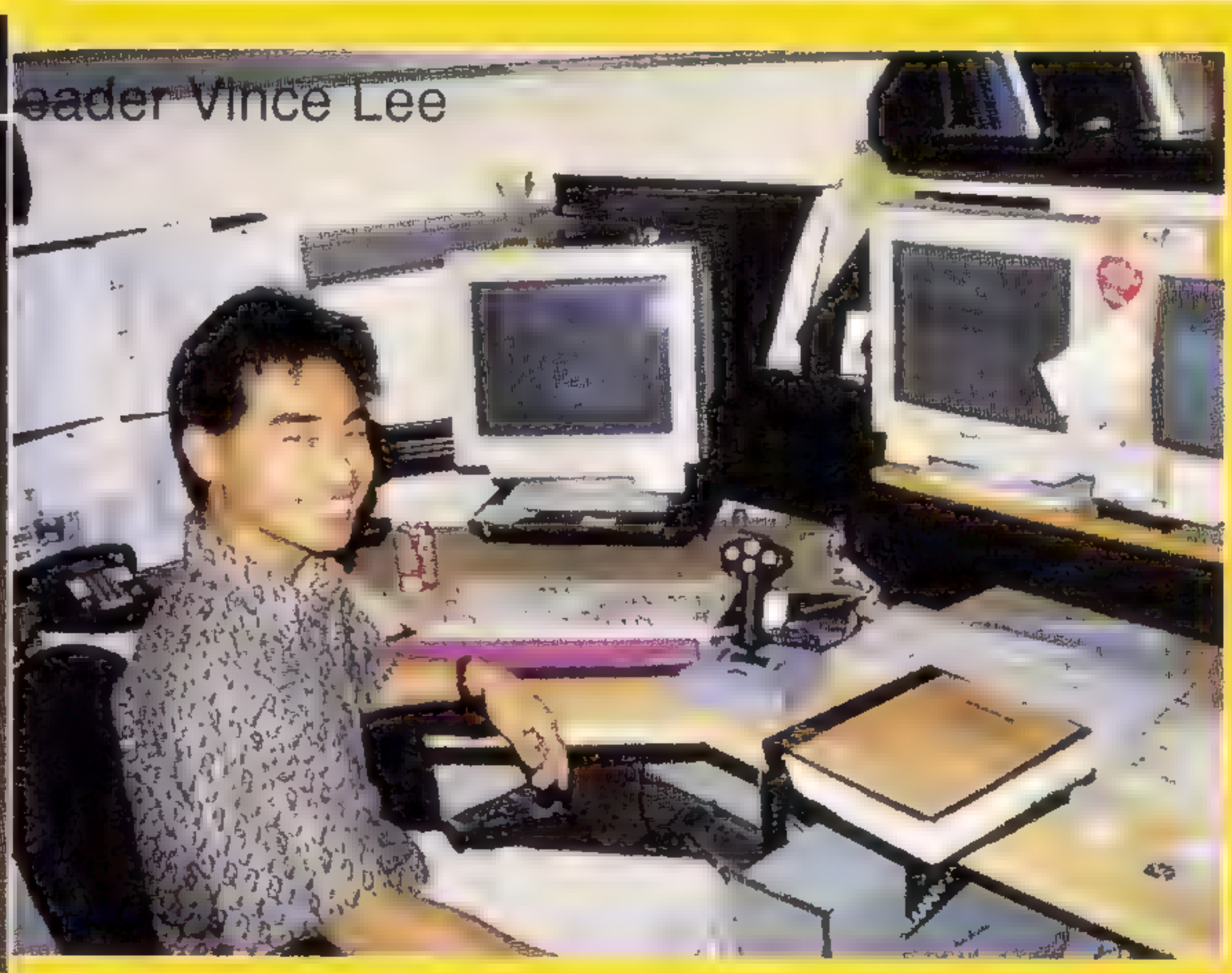




Project Leader Vince Lee

and that sort of thing is very limiting."

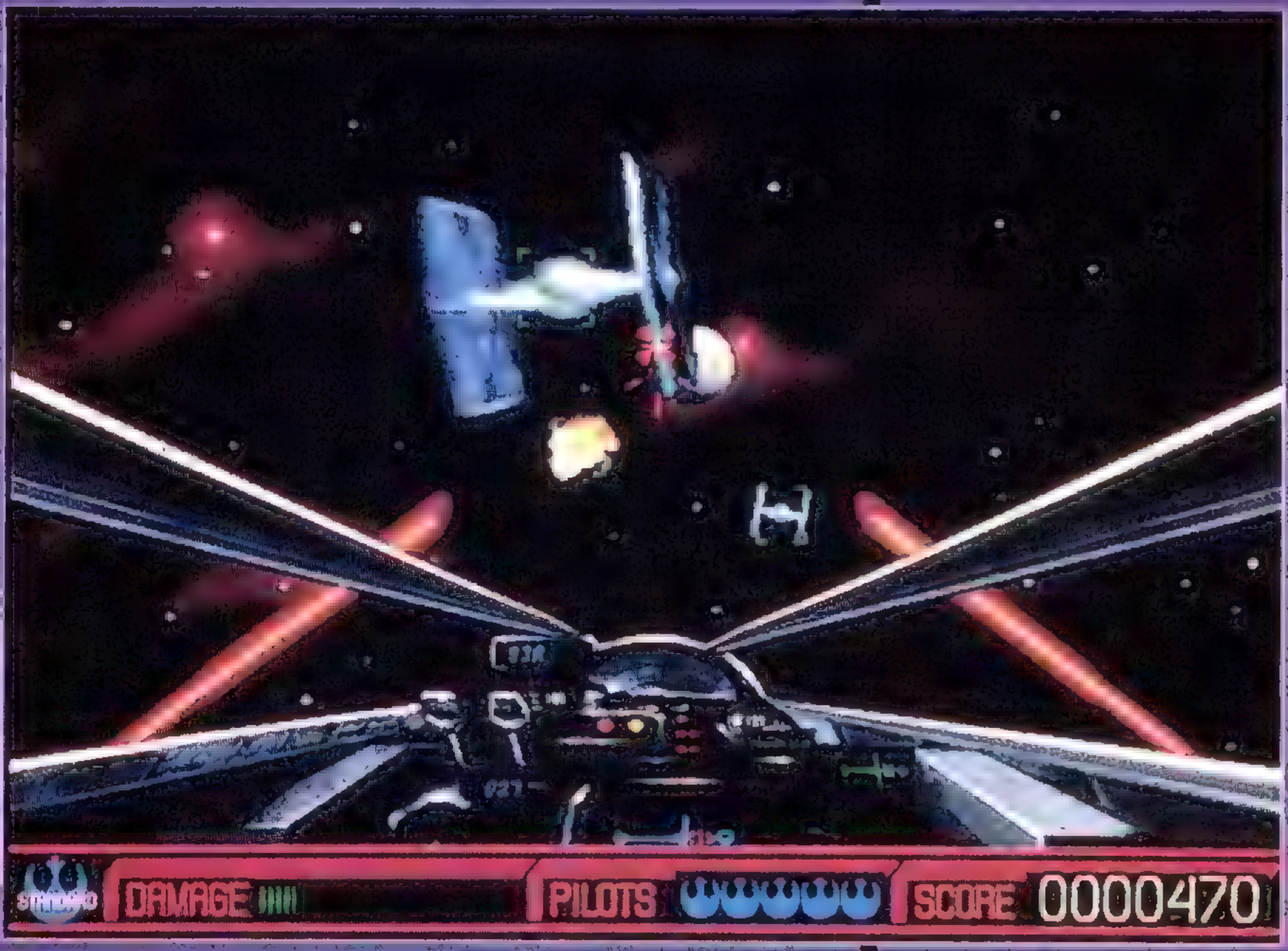
Lee removed some of those limits by setting his fantasy within the *Star Wars* universe while remaining safely away from most characters and plot devices found in the three movies. The three central characters from *Rebel Assault* return. You are Rookie One, the young Rebel pilot from the original *Rebel Assault*. After answering a routine distress call from a ship in the Bermuda Triangle-like Dreighton Nebula, you are sucked into a one-on-one battle with the Empire, headed up by his heavy breathingness himself, Darth Vader. One-on-one, that is, until you meet up with your old partner, Ru Murleen, the third returning character. After thorough investigation and more than a few battles in various Rebel spacecraft, you discover that the Nebula is being used as a cover for the Empire's development of a new weapon. It's got the plot complexity of a feature film; one worthy of the unblemished *Star Wars* name.

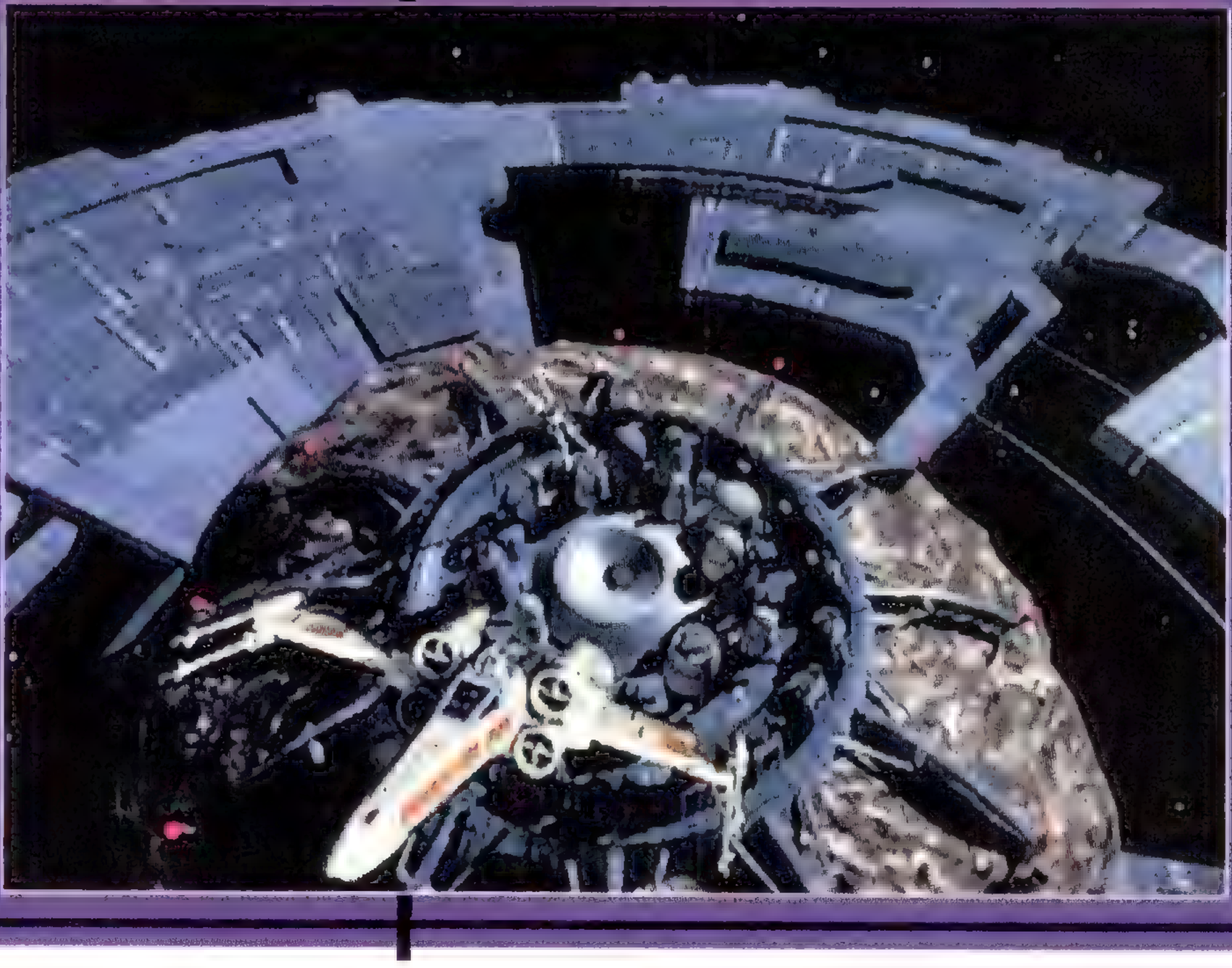
Even though *Rebel Assault*'s strongest attribute is, of course, its basis in *Star Wars* lore, Lee is careful not to have his creation pigeon-holed. "This game is not part of that nonexistent 'interactive movie' genre that everybody's looking for," says Lee. "The example I always use is this: When they were first doing driving games, for instance, they could tell you where they were headed. The perfect driving game would look like if you stuck a video camera in your car and drove around. The imagery would be that good. But if you asked someone what the perfect interactive movie would be, they couldn't give you an answer, and that's the problem. You can't aim for anything if you don't have a target. That's why *Rebel Assault II* doesn't head in that direction. It's basically an arcade game with movies."

> "There's a few secrets and codes in the game. You just have to look for them."
> —Rich Green, Lead Artist

Even so, this is about the closest anyone has come to producing a true "interactive movie" to date. It has all the aspects of a motion picture: cinematic method, amazing special effects, gorgeous scenery, strong character interaction, a symphonic soundtrack, an intriguing plot, and some incredible battle scenes. But there's a twist—*you're* controlling all those battle scenes. That's the arcade game part, and it's one hell of a contest.

When you start out in a first-person battle near the Dreighton Nebula, the first sound effect you'll probably hear is your jaw dropping at how beautiful the graphics are. After this heated battle and a beautifully produced cut scene, you'll find yourself hiding in doorways and leaping out to blast Imperial Stormtroopers. Here's where the detail really shows. When you miss a 'trooper and hit the wall with your blaster, it leaves a little scorch mark. Nice touch. This level





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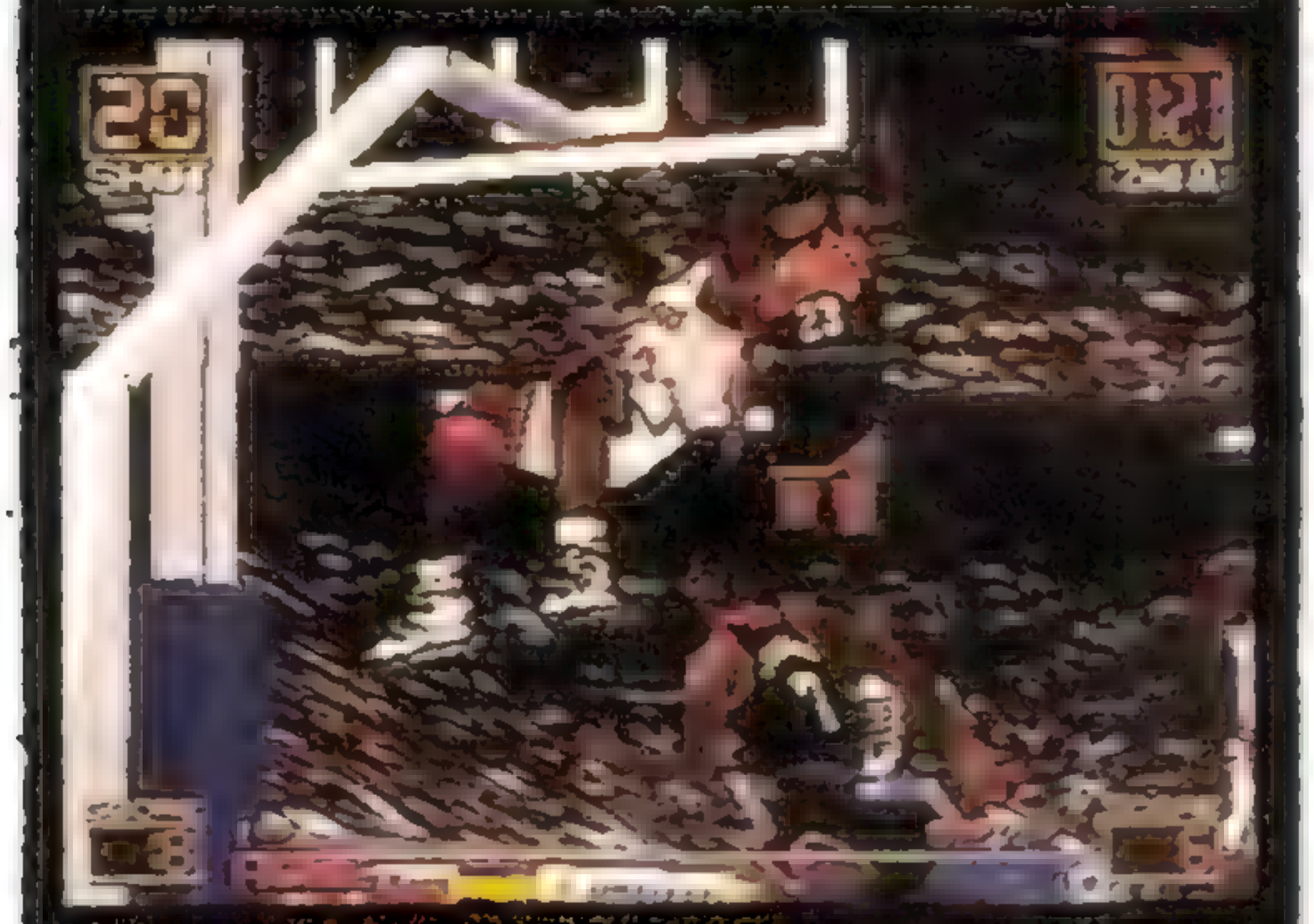

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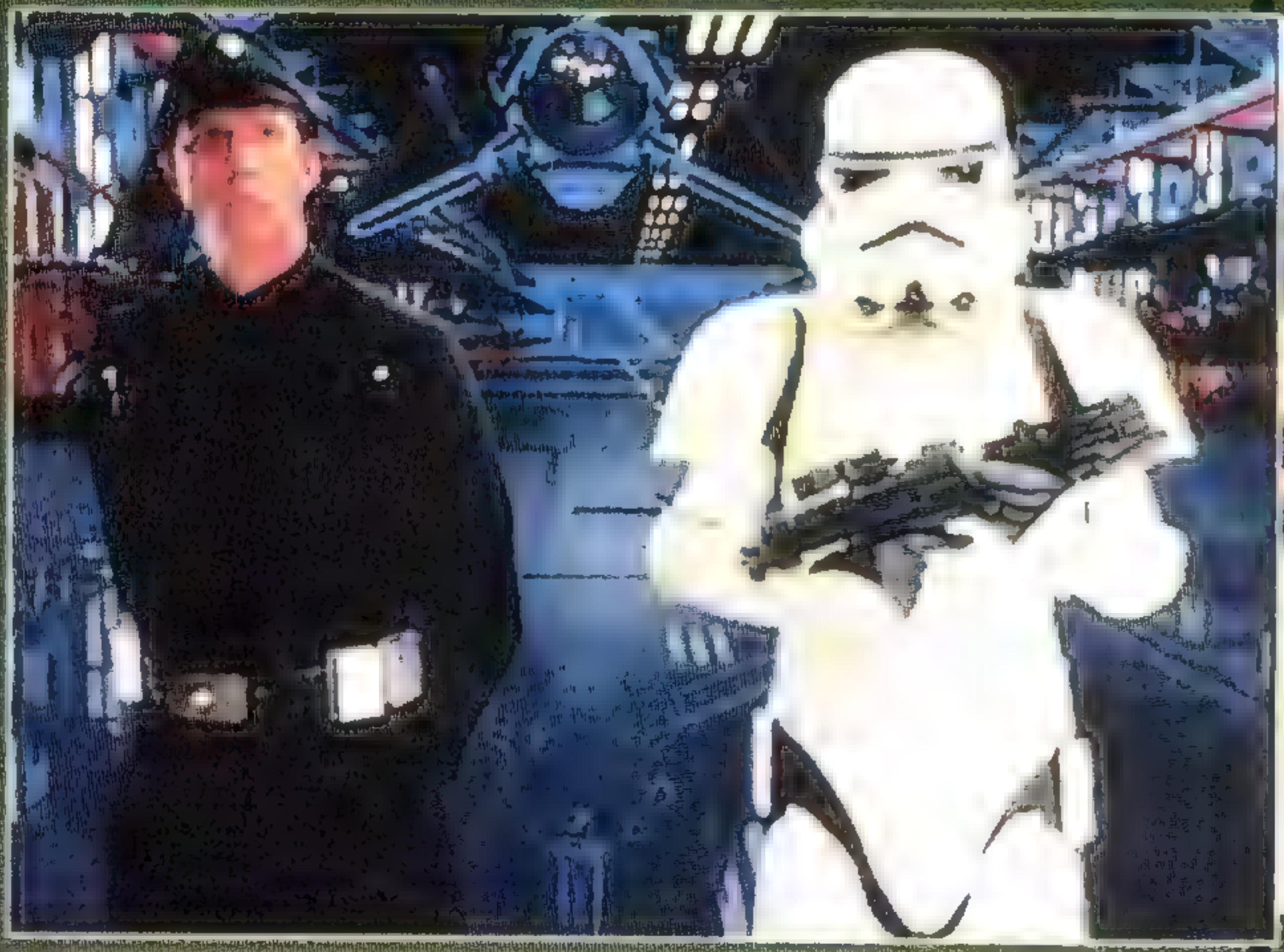
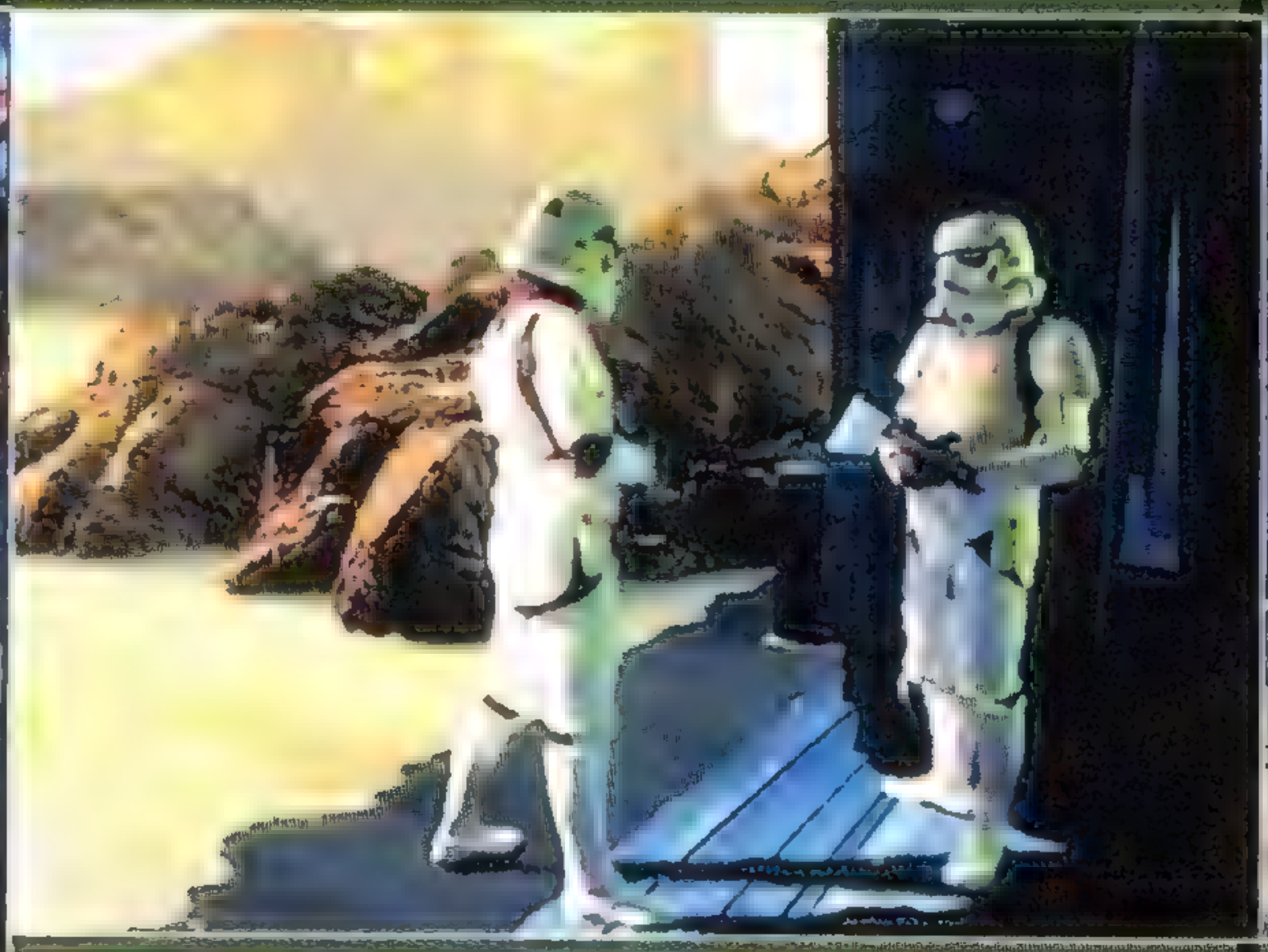
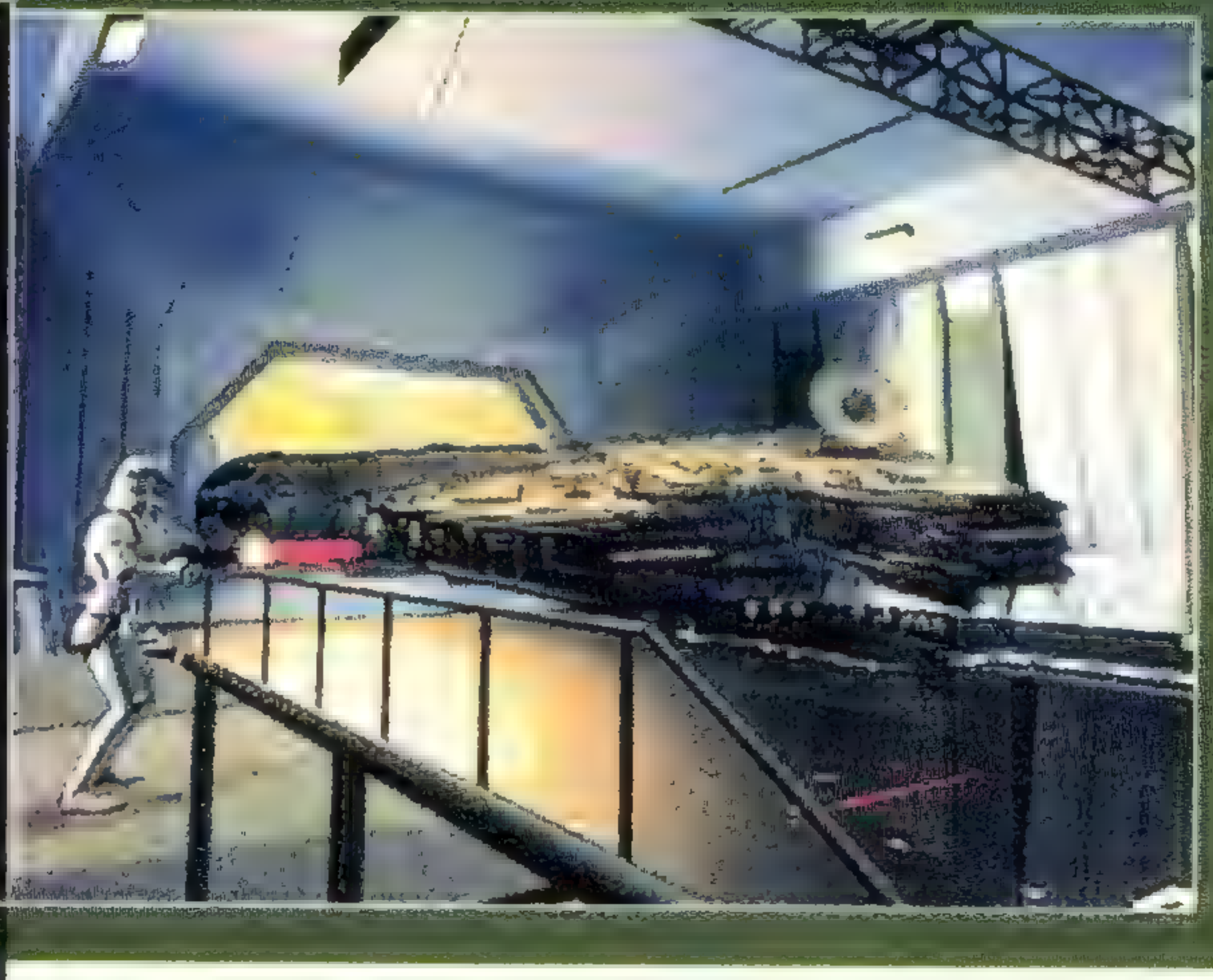






is followed by third type of battle, this time a behind-the-ship journey through tunnels and a fourth distinct play mode where you'll don a Stormtrooper's armor and take a perilous trek through the sewers aided only by the night vision in the helmet and your trusty blaster. The other eleven of the fifteen levels are variations on the four basic themes, but each is different from the last and they definitely get harder towards the story's climax, approaching near-impossible difficulty in chapter 15.

> "It's basically an arcade game with movies."
> —Vince Lee, Project Leader

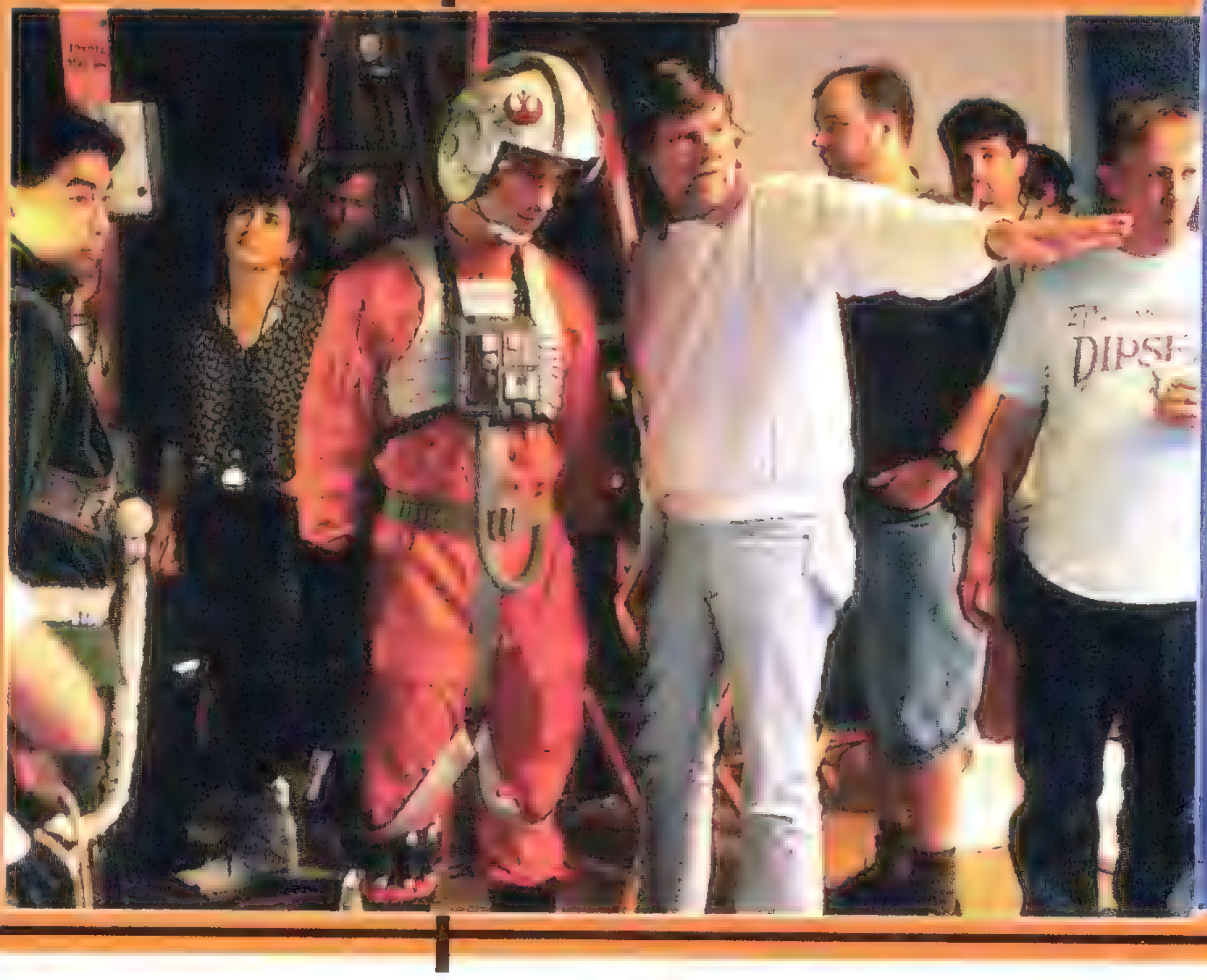
The blaster levels are pure duck hunt-style target practice, and the space battles are reminiscent of *Star Wars*, the arcade game—you shoot and the computer steers. Some would call it limiting, but something—maybe it's the challenge, maybe it's the *Star Wars* tie-in, maybe it's just the clarity and visceral impact of the imagery—makes it interesting and keeps you playing 'til the end. In that sense, it truly is the arcade experience Lee says it is.

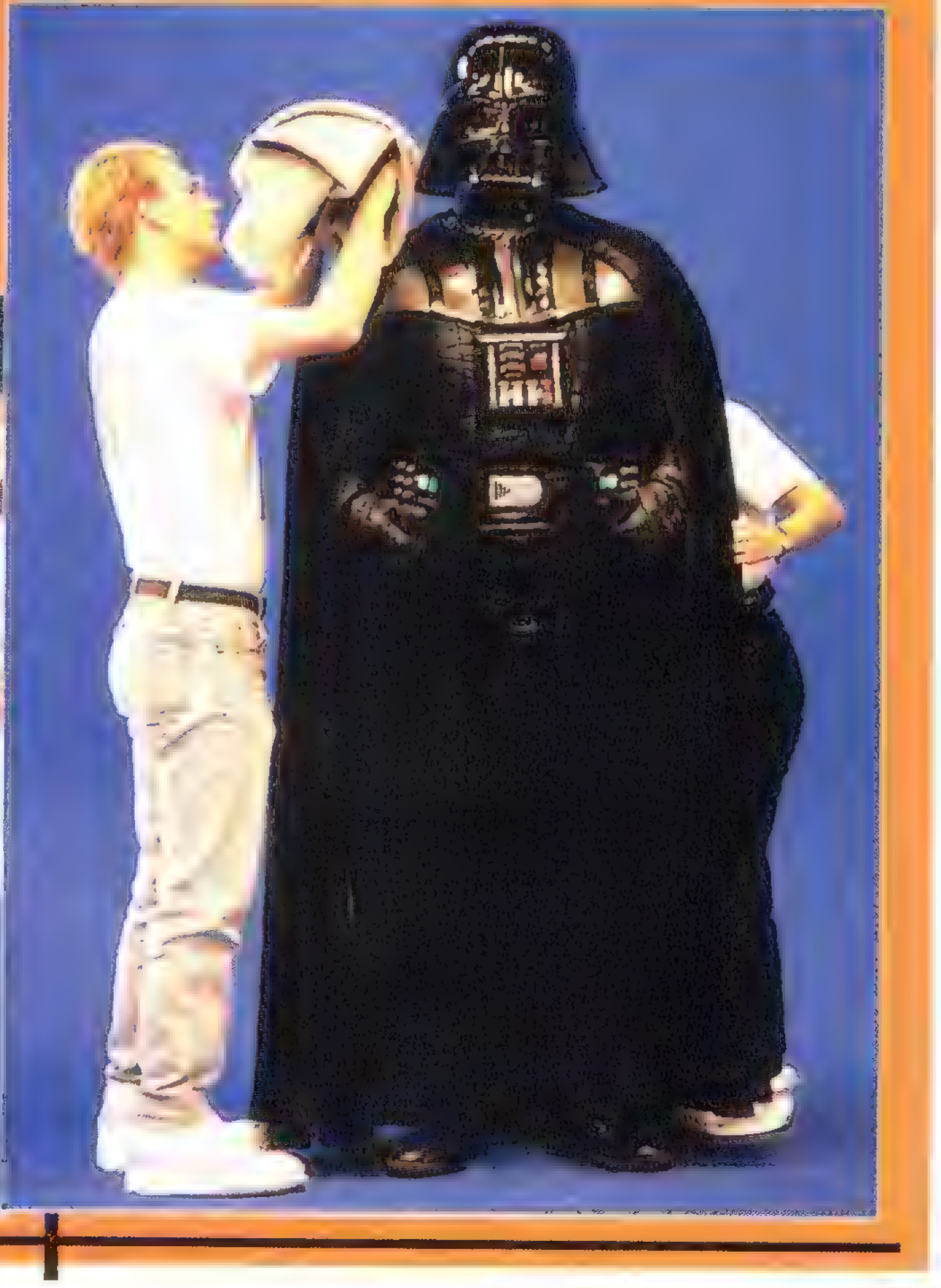
And when it comes to game features, *Rebel Assault II*'s loaded. Passwords pop up after every level to save your place. There's a difficulty editor with which you can customize everything from your chances of hitting an enemy to the power of his weapons; and there are definitely more than a few Easter eggs. Said Lead Artist Rich Green, "It's kind of a Vince Lee tradition. There's a few secrets and codes in the game. You just have to look for them."

As for those jaw-dropping graphics, what you actually see is a B-Wing cockpit view laid over full screen computer-rendered video of space and oncoming TIE Fighters that is streamed directly off the CD. That's the jaw-dropping part. The video even looks flawless coming off of a double-speed drive—a computer gaming first—thanks to Lee's proprietary video compression code. The most incredible graphics, though, are those in the cinematic cut scenes. The combination of the blue-screen video footage with the computer-rendered backgrounds is some of the best ever seen on a computer screen. The rendered backgrounds are crisp and highly detailed, and the integration of the video with shadowing and lighting effects make it hard to believe the actors aren't on real sets. It certainly helps that the transitions between these cinematic scenes and the game action are smooth with very little seek time from the CD—a key to maintaining the movie illusion.

Still, Lee says, the video sequences are there only to enhance the gameplay. "Video is just a way of producing art. In the first game, we had animation. Now we have video, but you'll notice that they're both used in the same way. They're there to tell you about your mission, show you what you need to do, maybe reward you when you do something cool, but it's not the center of the game itself. It just adds to the environment, and makes you feel like you're in the *Star Wars* universe."

To emphasize his point, while others are spending millions shooting the footage for their "interactive movies" on 35-millimeter film with huge Hollywood sets, Lee chooses to do what he will soon become famous for—excellent, low-budget, blue-screened interactive experiences. "I don't think it's a conscious effort to say, 'We don't want to be like them,' but we know that what we do





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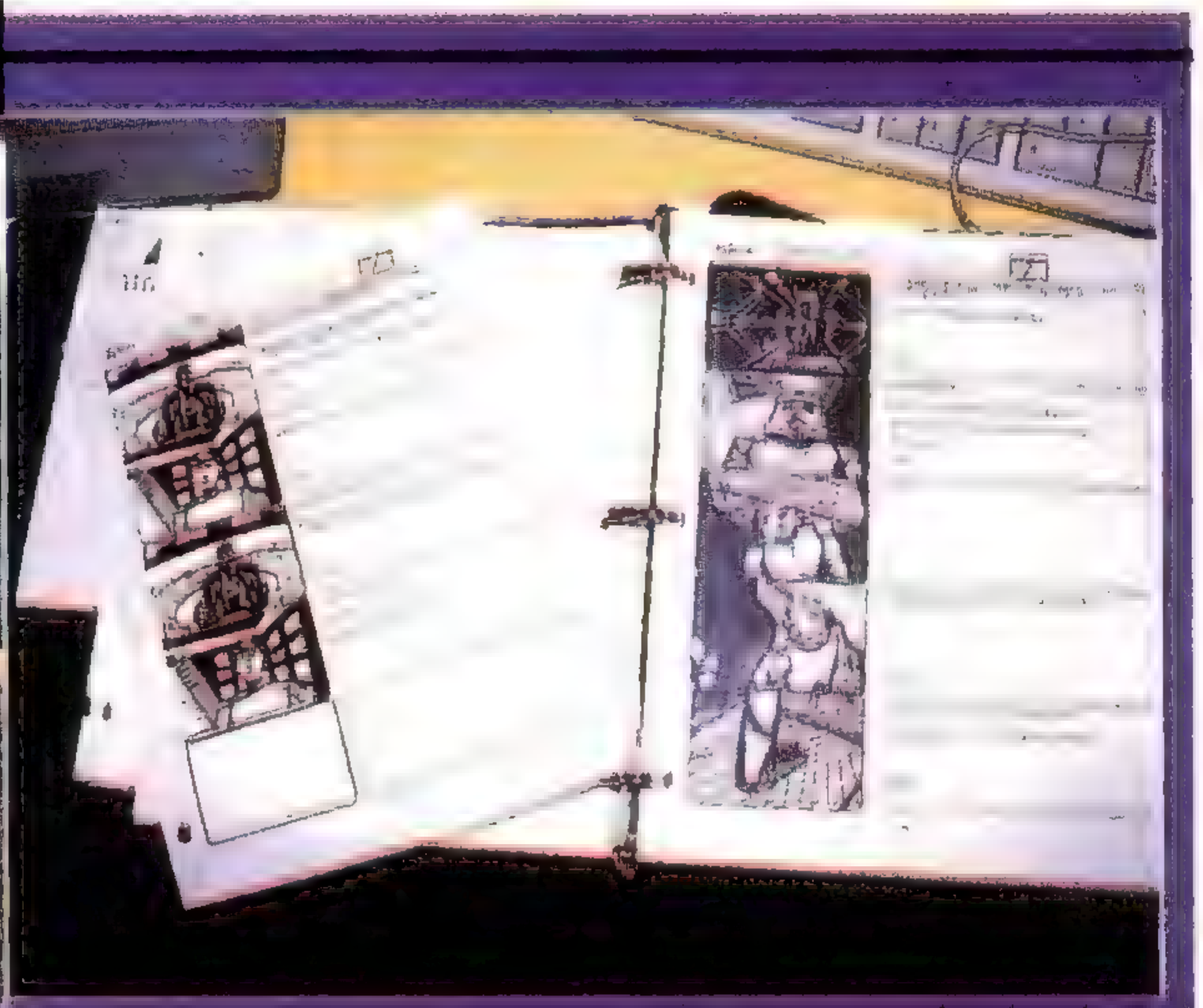

want is not what they're doing," Lee says. "We don't want to be attracted by the glittery lights, and I think it's kind of pretentious to say 'Oh, we're going to make movies and spend a lot of money.' You just don't need to have movie sets to make a game. I mean, the quality of our backgrounds and how they match with the blue-screen footage is just unprecedented."

There were other advantages in opting for computer-generated scenery. According to Green, "The big advantage to doing it digitally is if someone is interacting with a real environment, that means that shot can only be used for that. But if you do blue-screens, well, we've got shots in the game where we needed someone in the background and we used an element from a completely different scene—and it worked."

Though the first *Rebel Assault* was a very successful title, selling over a million copies to date, Lee says it was difficult making the decision to continue the series. "At first I didn't even want to do *Rebel II*, because when *Rebel I* came out, I thought I'd exhausted all the possibilities and I thought, 'I don't want to do the typical game industry thing, where you come out with something good and you just rush out a clone of it," says Lee. "If we come out with the same game with different imagery, then that would be cheap and I wouldn't want to be involved with that. But after I started thinking about it and working on it, I realized that there were a lot of things I could do, both in terms of presentation and gameplay that weren't done in the first game. I had to design the first game on-the-fly. Some of the elements of it weren't as well thought-out as possible. For example, on level 5 in the first game, you'll notice near the end of it, you're supposed to fly past all these chicken walkers and shoot them before they shoot you, but the way the animator animated it, they're all facing the same direction, away from the player, so they couldn't fire at you and it just became this big duck shoot."

> "When I started *Rebel II*, instead of starting with a story and building a game into it, I wanted to do it the other way around. With *Rebel I*, we were very story-oriented. It followed *Star Wars* quite a bit, and that sort of thing is very limiting."
> —Vince Lee, Project Leader

Things were a little better planned this time around, though, adds Lee: "We did more pre-production on *Rebel II* than we've ever done for any game in this company. Every shot in the game is an effects shot, so going into the video shoot, what we decided to do was have a list of every single shot with all the elements that were needed in that shot, be it video or dialogue or what ADR needed to be done. It was a lot of work to begin with, but it was the only way we could pull off something like this. I don't think anyone in or out of the gaming industry has seen anything that looks like *Rebel Assault II*, both in terms of the video quality, and the compositing, and the music and how it all ties together. I think it's groundbreaking in a lot of ways."

And it had better be just that. All tolled, Lee's team has spent over 30,000 man hours on the project. Even back in May, Lee knew the kind of task that lay ahead for his team: "This is the first time George Lucas has let anyone else film a live-action *Star Wars* fantasy," he said. "It was really an honor making this game—so we know it'd better be good!"

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VIRTUAL MOM

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN NEXT-GENERATION GAMING TRIES TO CROSS THE GENERATION GAP? FLUX FINDS OUT AS ONE OF OUR MOMS TAKES ON NINTENDO'S VIRTUAL BOY

BY DAN AMRICH–AND HIS MOTHER, DEE

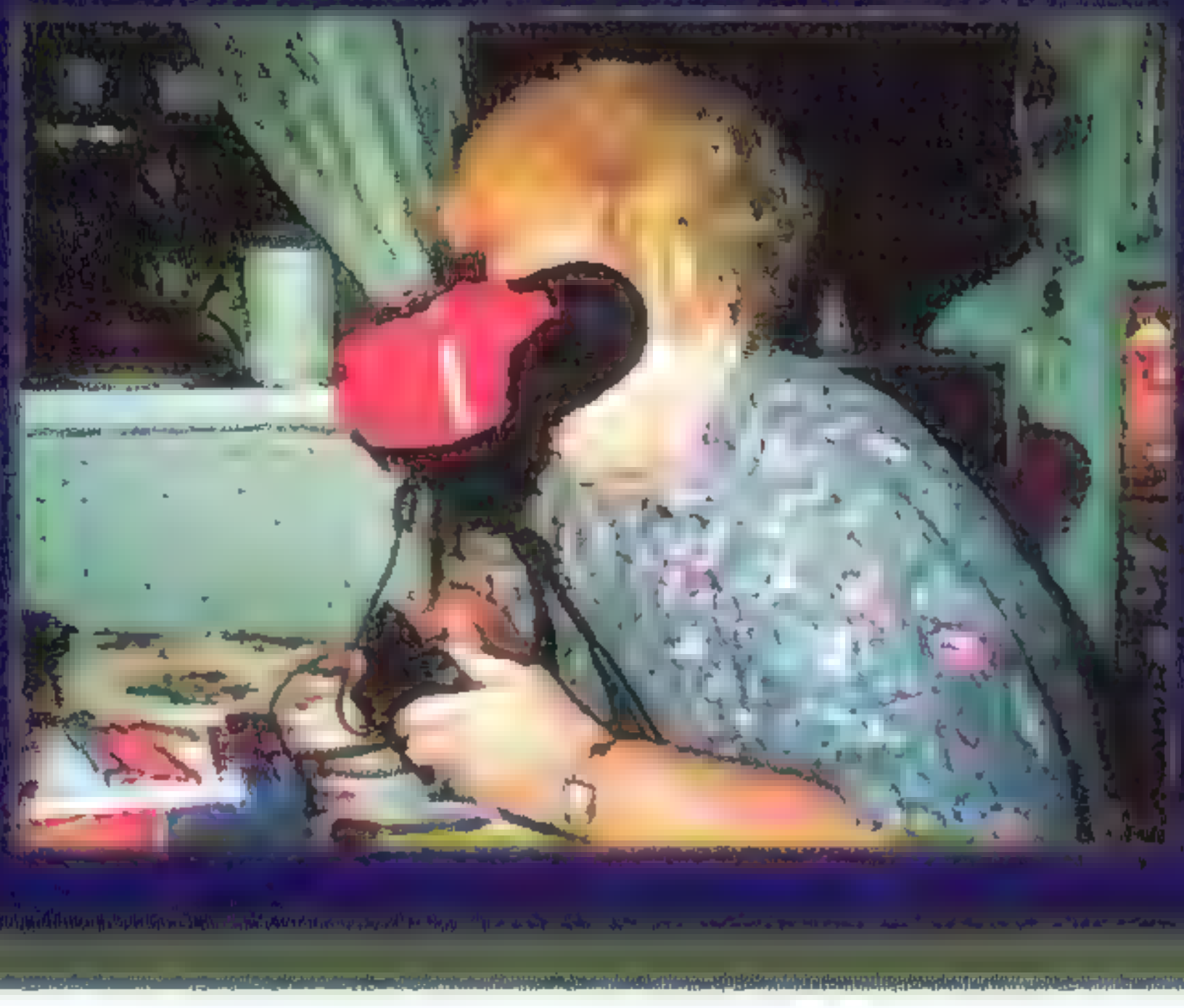
"You'll ruin your eyes!" That's all I heard growing up. "It's a nice day. Why are you in here playing Atari? Is your homework done? Don't sit so close. You'll ruin your eyes." My mom was only looking out for me, of course, and she had no idea that sitting in the living room in front of the ol' 27" RCA playing *Pitfall!* on the 2600 would lead to a career in [*snicker*] video game journalism.

Mom's cool about games now, though. She always liked *Pac-Man*, anyway, and now she listens with bemused interest when I tell her about how fun it is to gore demons with chainsaws or that I can finally pull off Orchid's Ultra Combo. But when she came over my apartment one day and saw a big, red, ViewMaster-like box on a little black tripod, she had to try it out.

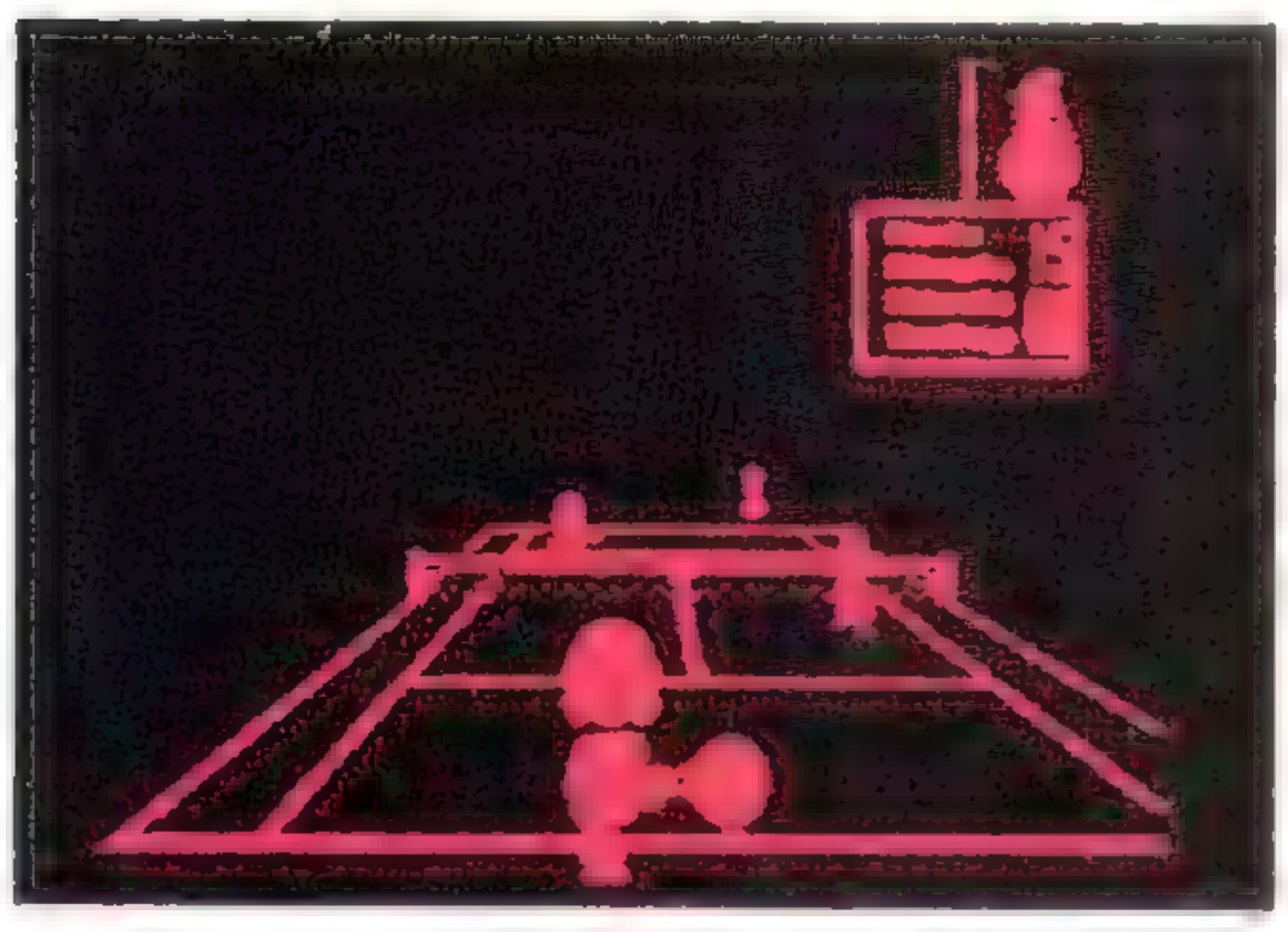
That's right. Kids everywhere are dissing the very concept of the Virtual Boy, Nintendo's 32-bit, all-in-red portable 3-D gaming system, but my mom was instantly drawn to it. Since she expressed interest, we figured we'd let her have a crack at reviewing the system and its initial crop of games. So, one rainy afternoon, I sat down with my over-50 mother, Dee, a Virtual Boy unit, a stack of carts and two important missions: one, to get the unbiased truth about the Virtual Boy experience from someone who hadn't heard anything good or bad about the system, and two: to ruin my mother's eyes!

MARIO'S TENNIS [Nintendo]

Logically, we started with the pack-in game. But before my mom could start smashing lobs over the virtual net, some basics had to be addressed.



MOM: [*Stabbing at the controller lying on the table with one finger*] I push this...and then this?



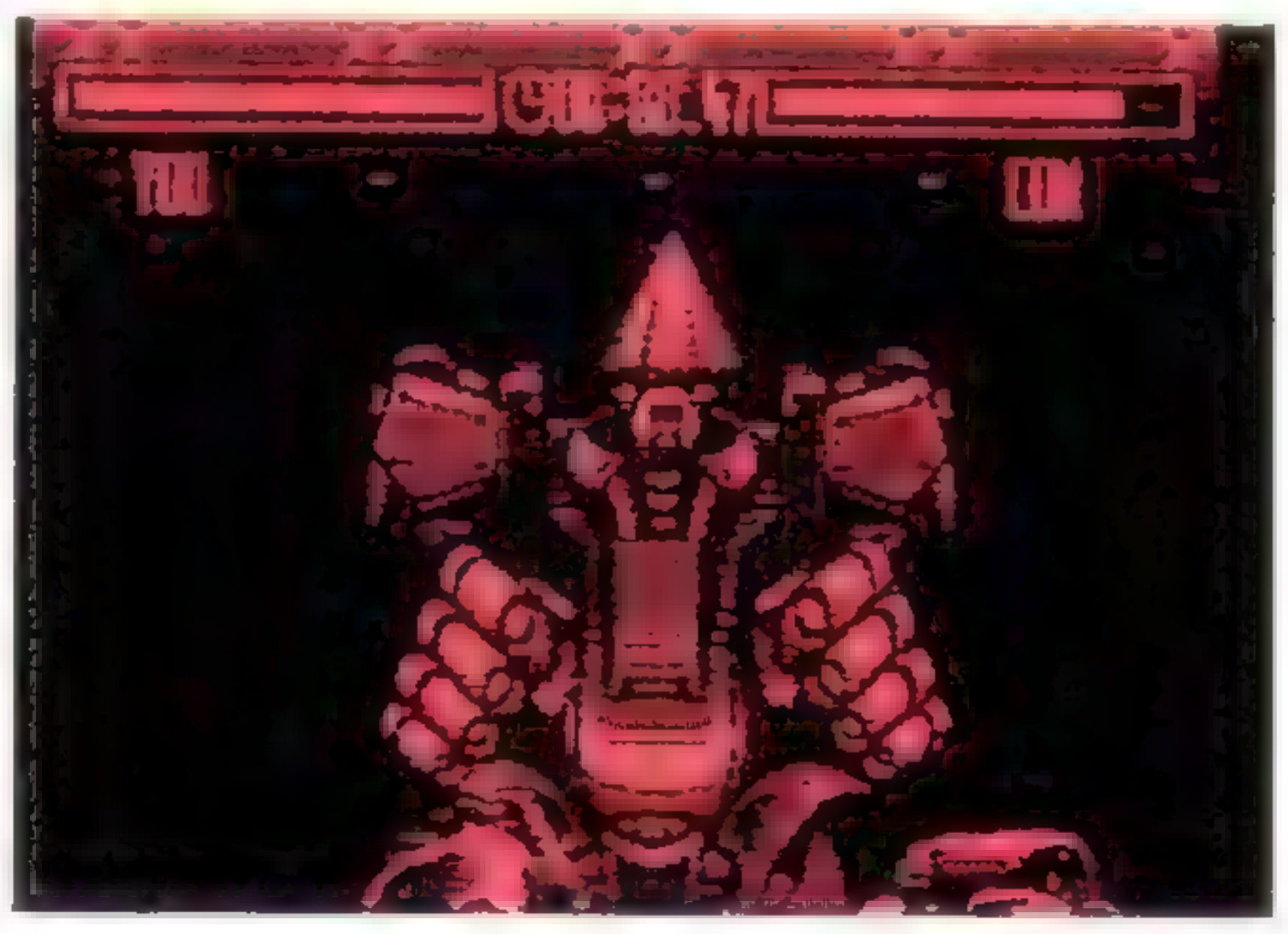
DAN: Actually, this is designed so you hold it in your hand. Put your thumb on the black cross-shaped pad there, and that directs your person around.
MOM: Okay. [*Mom shoves her face into the visor, never to surface again.*] I have it on Doubles. I can' t get back to Singles.
DAN: Well, do you want to play doubles or do you want to play singles? It doesn't matter to me....
MOM: Okay, playing singles.
DAN: Oh, you restarted, there you go.
MOM: Now I don't hit this black button any more, right? [*Pause*] Dan!
DAN: This one you do. You don't have to keep hitting Start. You can do the rest with these buttons over here.
MOM: When I want to start a game, I hit that one?
DAN: Uh huh. [*Pause*] No, the cross button is to direct your player when you're playing.
MOM: Okay. [*Frustrated*] Then how to I start the game?
DAN: You start the game using one of these buttons over here. You choose what you want with this pad. You can control the girl, Mario, an ape, whatever.
MOM: Okay...here we go. Mario vs. Luigi. [*Giggle*] Come on. [*Giggle*] I like this, I've got control. [*Pause*] Oops. I missed that one.

Suddenly, without any prompting, Mom begins a round of Mario's Tennis.

MOM: It's a shame it's only in one color.
DAN: Does that bother you?
MOM: No, not really—I just notice it. I like the way the characters move around, though. I like the little dance that Luigi does over there. And I like the music on this; it's cute.
DAN: Are you getting the three-dimensional depth effect?
MOM: Yes. But I'm going to have to take my glasses off, because they're steaming up. There we go, there we go. I'm actually playing tennis!
DAN: Do you feel immersed? Does it feel like virtual reality?
MOM: Yeah, yes. [*Giggle*] There we go, there we go. I like this, this is a good stress breaker. Whoa, it came right at me! I missed that one. I can't win anything on computer games.
DAN: It's okay, neither can I.
MOM: Ahh. Luigi has two.
DAN: How many have you got?
MOM: Mario's got none.
DAN: You're Mario, aren't you?
MOM: I don't know.
DAN: I think you are.
MOM: I'm the guy on this end, I guess. Ooh, I'm getting good at this. This must be great to have in the middle of the night when you can't sleep.
DAN: Is this the kind of game you would want to play again and again?
MOM: Yeah, I would. Especially this game, I like this one. I can't believe that I'm actually doing this. I always thought I was too old for this stuff.
DAN: So *Mario's Tennis* wins your approval?
MOM: Yeah, I love it. It's fun.

TELEROBOXER [Nintendo]

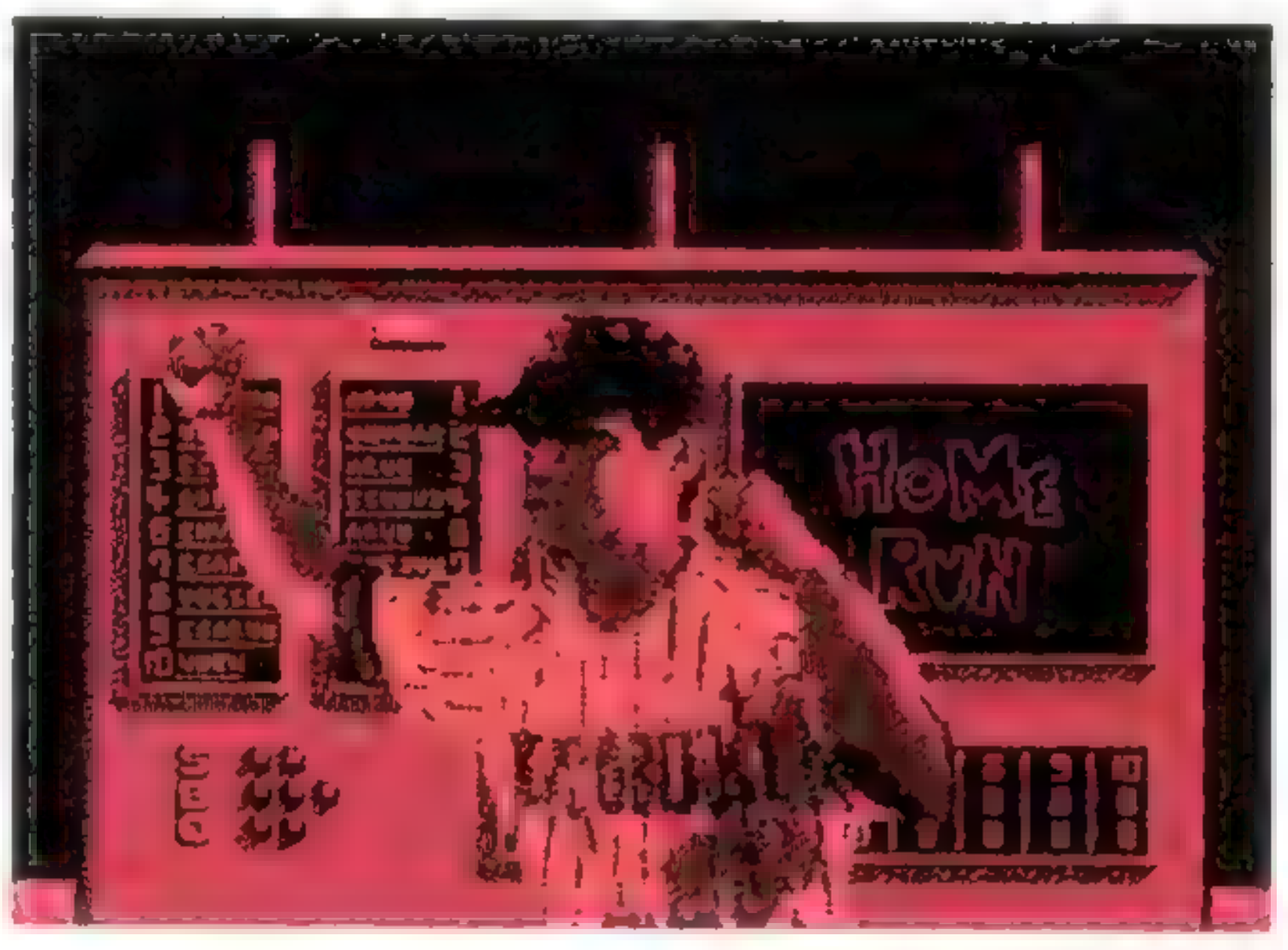
DAN: This one's called *Teleroboxer*. It's set in a future society where people control giant robots that box for them so nobody gets hurt.



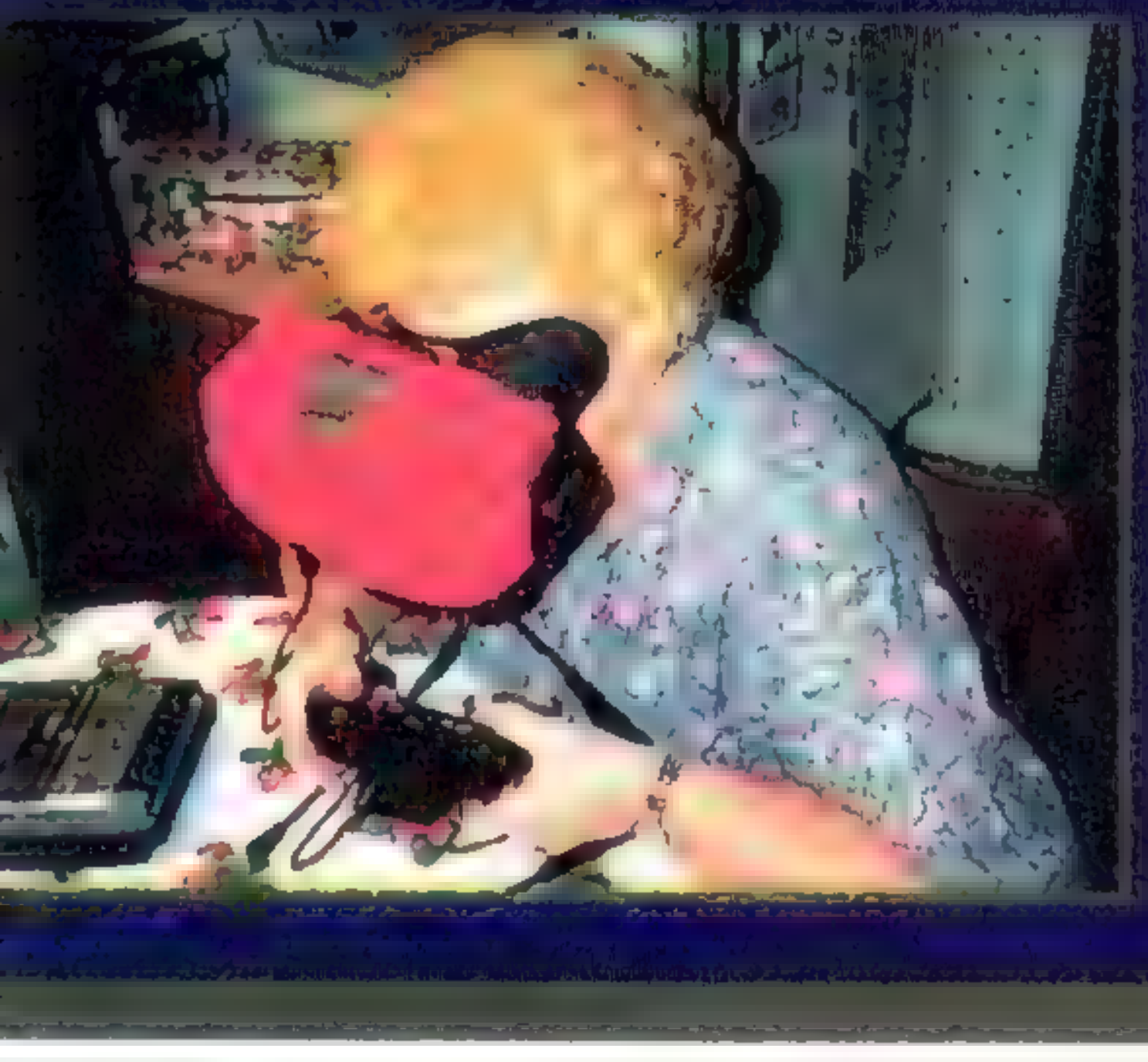
MOM: [*starts game*] Hmm. Ugly creature. [*Pause*] He's not playing fair. [*Pause*] I don't like this one. It's not as realistic as the other ones. Besides, I lost. [*laughs*] I got knocked out...and they're cheering.
DAN: How does the 3-D effect on this one hit you?
MOM: It's 3-D, but I think it would be better if they actually looked like people, instead of monsters. I feel like I'm playing against something from outer space. It's not that realistic. [*Mom battles through the rest of the round*] "Take a break—round over." Yeah, that's only because I was winning. But I think I'm done with this one.
DAN: Had enough already? That didn't take long.
MOM: Yeah. The music was pretty good and the 3-D thing works—it's a little scary, with the fists coming right at you—but overall, I don't like that one as much as *Tennis*. But I'd give it a second chance.

VIRTUAL LEAGUE BASEBALL [Kemco]

Mom's got the hang of it now. And as a lifelong Philadelphia Phillies fan, she says she's ready to tackle Kemco's baseball cart.



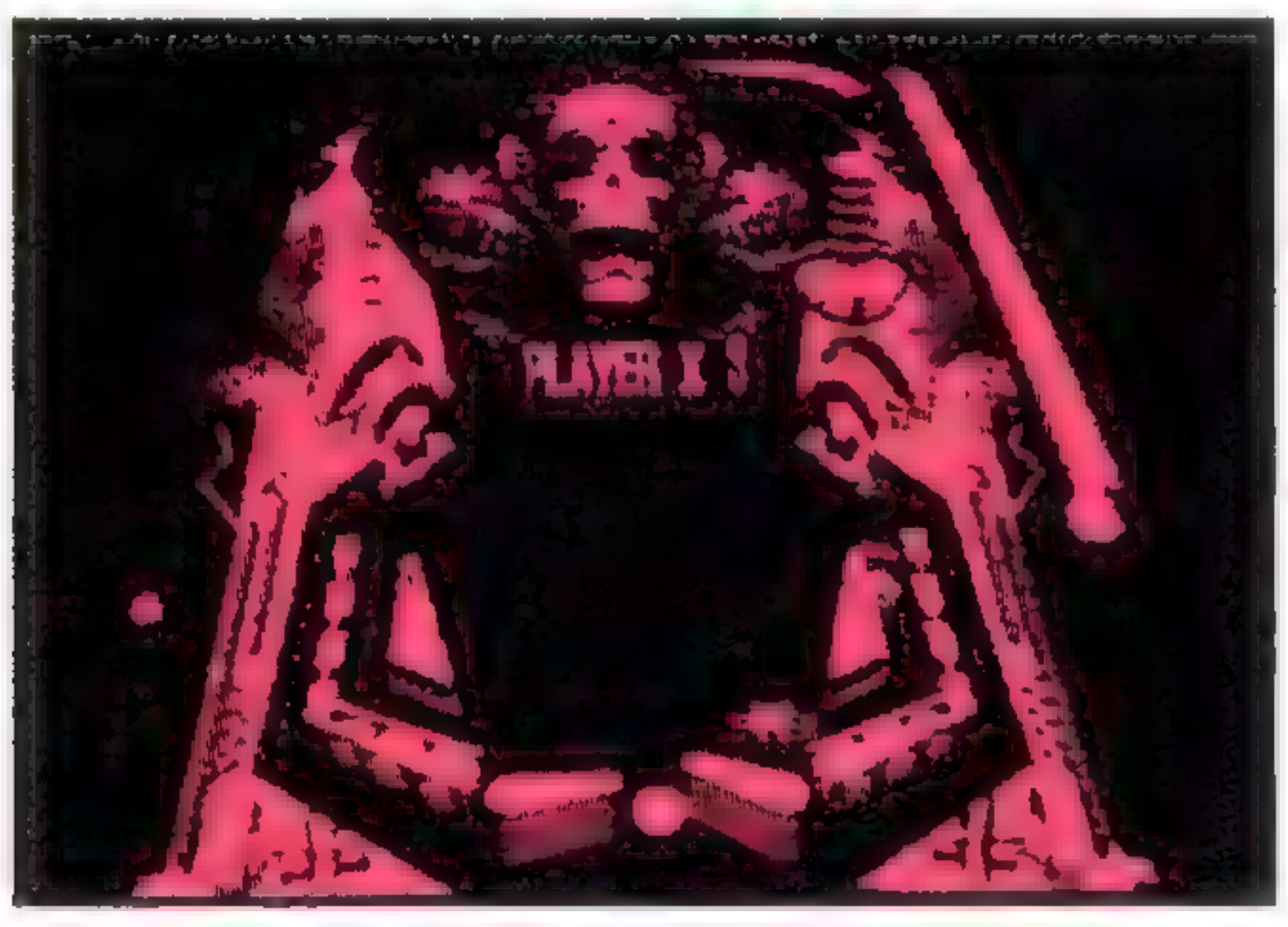
MOM: Okay, the United States vs. Canada. And you can pick your own players. Play ball. Lets go. [*Pause*] Uh-oh, long line drive. I like the 3-D effect on this.
DAN: Does this work better for you in 3-D than it would on a normal screen?
MOM: Yeah. Ooh, it even tells you how fast the ball is going. This guy's throwing fastballs. I'm a little confused. I forget now...I have to hit this one button for the swing? [*Pause*] Oh, I see. You have to get used to this.
DAN: What do you like about this one?
MOM: I like the action. I also like the idea that when I'm in the outfield, I can move the guys. I like the fielding.



DAN: What don't you like?
MOM: The music. I feel it should be something...different. It should play "Take Me Out To The Ball Game."
DAN: How about the control? You seemed to have some trouble there at first.
MOM: No, the controls are fine. But it's not something that you can learn to play just once. You gotta get the feel of...oh, I just made an out. I can't always tell who's up. Oh, I see—it's the bottom of the first inning.
DAN: What's the score?
MOM: One to nine. [*laughs*] One thing that's nice is that they have left-handers and right-handers—that's realistic. [*Pause*] Ah, now I'm getting it—I'm striking guys out. One, two, three, down you go. Just like our old Phillies. Well, it's the right color for the Phillies....
DAN: Would it have made a difference if they were real major league teams instead of just made-up international teams?
MOM: I don't think so. It might make it a little bit more interesting, but I would always want to be the Phillies anyway. [*Pause*] Two in a row. I'm becoming quite a pitcher.
DAN: If you're down by ten runs the game is over, so....[*The game emits sad music.*] Oh, there you go. You lost.
MOM: The score was 2 to 12. I got two runs, though.
DAN: Is this a game that you'd want to come back to again?
MOM: Yeah, I want to learn how to play it. This one takes time.

GALACTIC PINBALL (Nintendo)

Mom has gone from comfortable to downright cocky.

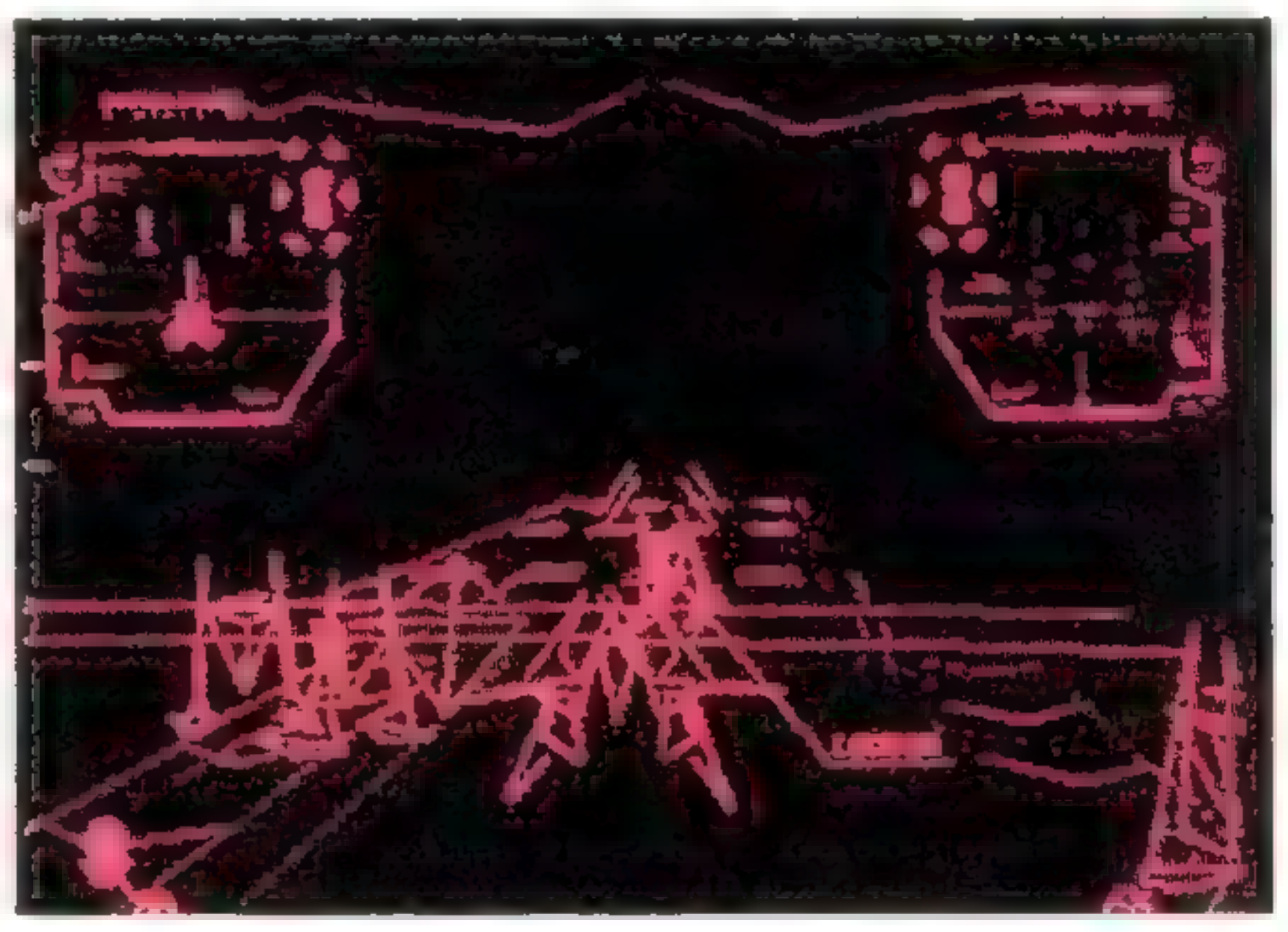


MOM: We're not even going to read the instructions on this one, we're just going to go in cold. Okay, let's see...oh, you're only #3 on the high score list? Well, have no fear—I won't beat you. How do we start? Just push start? [*Starts playing*] Oh, yeah, that's the one! Yeah, yeah, yeah!
DAN: I take it you like this one.
MOM: Yeah, I like this. [*Makes sound effects noises*] You know, it really would be nicer if it flashed different colors when you got points. But it's a lot of fun.
DAN: Is pinball something you think works better as a 3-D game?
MOM: Yeah. Well, the one that I play on my PC [*Epic Pinball*] has different colors, but here I have better control of the flippers.
DAN: How do you feel about....
MOM: You're bothering me, you know. You can just leave this with me and I'll...oh, I'm racking 'em up. Come on, get up there—up, up! Oh, I feel stupid—I'm talking to the machine. [*Pause*] There we go. Oh, I like this. I'm going to take your name off that high score list! [Galactic Pinball *starts making excited noises.*] I got a bonus bumper. A big thing just came down—is it a skull? What the hell does that mean?
DAN: I don't know...aim for the center, I guess.
MOM: Hey, I just got 2 million. Game over—5,350,000 points. That's not bad for a first time. And I get to enter my name! How do I do that? I've never gotten on the high score board. Oh, I put a wrong letter in; my name doesn't have three E's. I'm not doing very well with this part. That's probably something they could improve—make putting the name in easier. [*Finishes entering name*] Holy cow! I'm at the top! I got the biggest score. Son of a gun. Who says I'm an old lady?

RED ALARM (Nintendo)

Even though she ruled at *Galactic Pinball*, Mom seems wary of the final game, *Red Alarm*—a 3-D wireframe space shooter.

DAN: We'll leave the trickiest one for last.



MOM: I don't make out well with spaceships. This is accelerate, this is reverse? I'm frightened of this one. You said it was hard already. [*Pause*] Oh, wow, what 3D! Wow. The graphics are unbelievable. It reminds me of *TRON*. You remember *TRON*? Nobody could believe that I went to see that. They didn't know what a cool mom I was. [*Pause*] Now we're taking off. Dramatic. Now I have to find out who I am, and I don't quite know where I'm going. I'm in a tunnel, there are things on the side. [*Struggling hard with the controller, twisting it in the air*] I don't like this one. Maybe I'm not doing it right, but there's nothing coming at me, not enough action. I think I'm moving forward down the hole; I keep using up fuel. And the screen keeps telling me it's Nintendo Virtual Boy—big deal. I don't have any score.
DAN: What do you think of the music?
MOM: Hideous. Yeah. The theme from *Star Wars* would have been much better. More heroic. Instead, the sound is really sad on this one. Poor, really poor.
DAN: What about the graphics?
MOM: The 3-D effect is there, but it's not all that realistic for me. Maybe it's not fair for me to judge this one; it may be that I just don't care for space games, and I'm not doing very well. I have a low score.
DAN: Do you think you'd enjoy it if you bought it and practiced?
MOM: I would not buy this one—not for myself. The graphics were better on the other ones. I don't like the wire frame, I like the real thing. Even Mario shaking his tush. That was cute. [*Pause*] Game over. If you got into it, this one might be fun. This is the worst one for me, but it's probably one the kids would like. I hear an alarm going off in my arthritic fingers.

VIRTUAL BOY: THE VERDICT

DAN: How much would you be willing to pay for something like this?
MOM: What would come with it?
DAN: The tennis game.
MOM: Just one game?
DAN: One game, a controller, no batteries, although you can send away for some free batteries.
MOM: Well, I'm not too sure what these things run, but I'd expect to pay $175, probably. I have no idea because I've never seen it.
DAN: If you were a kid and you had two hundred dollars burning a hole in your pocket....
MOM: Oh, I'd buy one. It's entertaining, and it's something I would come back to over and over again. What the heck—you go to the mall and you put quarters into the same machines over and over again. Why not have this at home instead of taking your quarters to the mall and getting mugged?
DAN: What did you like most about Virtual Boy?
MOM: I liked tennis the best, then baseball. With baseball, I really felt like I was in the game.
DAN: What would you change if you could?
MOM: Well, the red graphics are sharp, but I would like to see them try to add other color. Especially pinball—I picture it with more colors. If you get a high score, there should be lights that flash colors and stuff.
DAN: What other kinds of games would you like the play on this type of system?
MOM: I'd like to see a bowling game, maybe football, and it might be interesting to see golf. A driving game would work, and so would some sort of motorcycle jumping game.
DAN: What do you see for Virtual Boy in the future?
MOM: I think it's going to be another kind of Atari. I think it's going to have hundreds of games. It's new, but I have confidence in them.

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MARTIAL

HE'S HIGH-KICKED HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF THE MARTIAL ARTS COMPETITION CIRCUIT AND MORE RECENTLY THE BOX OFFICE AS SCORPION IN THE MORTAL KOMBAT MOVIE–AND NOW HE'S GOT HIMSELF A NO. 1 TV SHOW. PRESENTING AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS CASAMASSA: THE MASTER OF DISASTER.

BY DANIEL B. LEVINE

Chris Casamassa is just one of those guys who *never* comes in second. The man has held the number-one ranking for five years in the North American Martial Arts circuit. He starred as Scorpion in the number-one hit movie, *Mortal Kombat*. He's currently performing in the number-one syndicated kids show, *WMAC Masters*. And if you're a dedicated FLUX reader, you'll remember Chris from our very first issue, when we called on him to play and critique the very first *Mortal Kombat* coin-op.

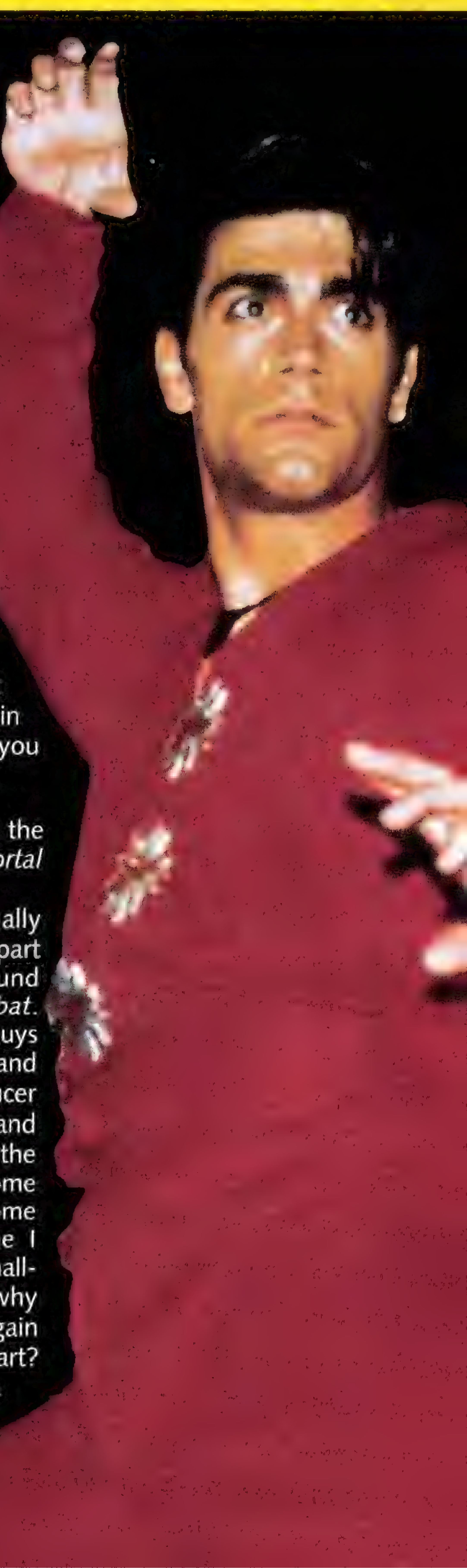
"Someone actually had that issue on the *Mortal Kombat* set!" says Chris. "It was amazing. One minute I was reviewing the game, and the next minute I was *in* the game!"

His current television project, *World Martial Arts Council Masters*, brings together competitors from over 10 disciplines, including Karate, Judo, Wushu, Taekwondo, Kickboxing and Capoeira. Fighters punch, kick, head-butt and body slam their opponents in order to win the "Dragon Star," a coveted award with an uncanny resemblance to a hub-cap. The whole shebang is hosted by Shannon Lee, daughter of martial-arts god, Bruce Lee. "She was great," gushes Casamassa. "She even went out dancing with us."

Anyone who saw Chris' epic fight scene in the *Mortal Kombat* movie will surely want to check him out on this new show for more of the same. Wait a minute, didn't Scorpion die a fiery death in *MK*? Sorry, Chris. I guess you can't be first all the time.

FLUX: How did you land the role of Scorpion in the *Mortal Kombat* film?

CASAMASSA: I originally auditioned for an "extra" part as one of the background fighters in *Mortal Kombat*. You know, one of the guys who run in, get beat up, and fall down. But the producer and director were there, and they picked me out of the crowd and asked me to come back and show them some more stuff. The next time I came in, the group was smaller. I was curious, because why would I have to audition again and again for an extra part? Anyway, I went back a total of four times. The last time I came in,



LAW

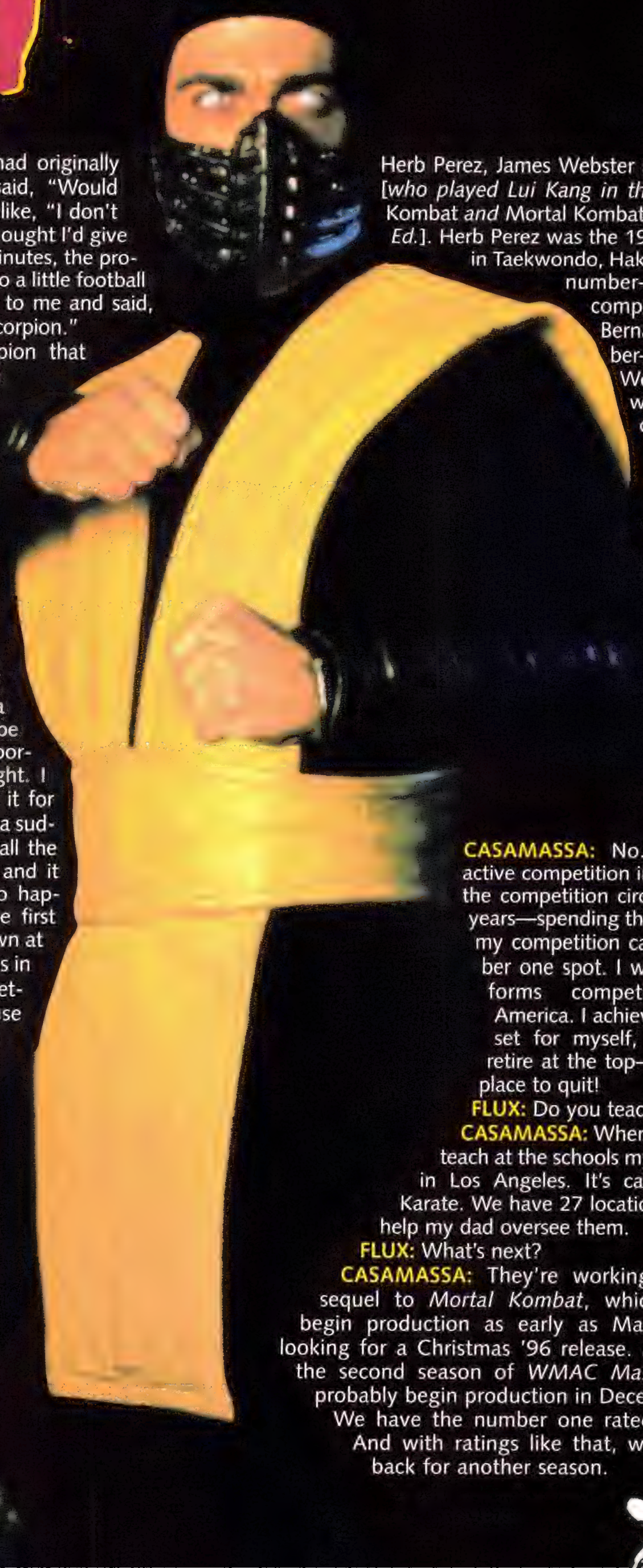
there were only three guys left—we had originally started with 50—and the producers said, "Would you mind taking your shirt off?" I was like, "I don't really know you guys that well," but I thought I'd give it a shot. After they filmed us for few minutes, the producer, director and cameraman went into a little football huddle. Then the director walked over to me and said, "Welcome to *Mortal Kombat*. You're Scorpion."

FLUX: So was it your work as Scorpion that brought you to the attention of the *WMAC Masters* producers?

CASAMASSA: Actually, *WMAC Masters* happened before *Mortal Kombat*, but we didn't start filming until after *Mortal Kombat* wrapped. While I was competing on the national martial arts circuit, I met someone who was scouting talent for *WMAC Masters*—that was about a year and a half ago—and she asked me if I'd be interested in working on a show that portrayed martial arts in a positive light. I didn't hear anything more about it for about a year, but then, all of a sudden, they had gotten all the production together and it was really going to happen. We shot the first 13 episodes down at Universal Studios in Florida. It was pretty tough, because we had to work nights—like seven at night 'till seven in the morning!

FLUX: Did you know any of the other martial artists on the show?

CASAMASSA: Yeah. Almost all the top guys on the show are guys I've competed against—because they picked the top martial artists they could find, like Hakim Alston, Mike Bernado, Herb Perez, James Webster and Ho Sung Pak [*who played Lui Kang in the original* Mortal Kombat *and* Mortal Kombat II *video games—Ed.*]. Herb Perez was the 1992 Gold Medalist in Taekwondo, Hakim Alston was the number-one weapons competitor and Mike Bernado was the number-one point fighter. We were all friends while we were competing, and Mike, Hakim, Herb and I are still good friends, and we try to see each other once a month, if we're not too busy. The hard part is that we all live in different parts of the country.



FLUX: Are you still competing?

CASAMASSA: No. I retired from active competition in '93. I'd been on the competition circuit for about ten years—spending the last five years of my competition career at the number one spot. I was the top open-forms competitor in North America. I achieved the goal I had set for myself, so I decided to retire at the top—which is a good place to quit!

FLUX: Do you teach?

CASAMASSA: When I'm not filming, I teach at the schools my dad started here in Los Angeles. It's called Red Dragon Karate. We have 27 locations, so I've got to help my dad oversee them.

FLUX: What's next?

CASAMASSA: They're working on the movie sequel to *Mortal Kombat*, which will probably begin production as early as March '96—they're looking for a Christmas '96 release. And then there's the second season of *WMAC Masters*, which will probably begin production in December or January. We have the number one rated show for kids. And with ratings like that, we'll definitely go back for another season.

Strategy Guide

by ZaCH MESTON

3DO

PRIMaL RaGE

PRIMAL
RAGE

After last issue's feature on the many home versions of *Primal Rage*, we figured we'd give you a strategy guide with all the special moves, fatalities and all the goofy secrets (which are sadly only to be found in the 32-bit home versions).

BASIC STRATEGIES

- *Primal Rage* has four attack buttons: High Quick (HQ), High Fierce (HF), Low Quick (LQ), and Low Fierce (LF). Since you can reconfigure the controls at your whim, we refer to the special moves by the attack buttons, not the default control configuration (which is: A = High Quick, B = High Fierce, C = Low Quick, L or R = Low Fierce). By pressing the HQ and HF or LQ and LF buttons at the same time, you execute a High Strong or Low Strong move.
- The method for executing special moves in *Primal Rage* is quite different from other fighting games. With most games, you perform the controller motion, then press the buttons. Here, you press (and hold) the buttons, then do the controller motion. Don't get confused.
- Fatalities can be done from anywhere on the screen—you don't need to position your dinosaur in a certain place—but you have to make sure he's far enough away that he doesn't hit the opponent when you hold down the buttons. *Primal Rage* gives you adequate time to enter the controller moves, so don't press the control pad *too* fast.
- There are two energy bars for each dinosaur: the larger Life Blood Bar and the smaller Brain Stem Bar below it. The Life Blood Bar is the energy of the dino; when it runs out, your dino is deader'n dead. The Brain Stem Bar is the dino's dizziness meter; it goes down every time you're hit, even when you're blocking. If the Stem Bar hits zero, your dino is dazed until 1) your enemy hits you or 2) you refill the Stem Bar by pressing Left and Right rapidly on the control pad.

- There are two types of blocks. To block a high attack, press Back on the control pad. To block a low attack, press Down/Back on the pad. You can't block if your opponent is performing a combo.
- There are three types of jumps. To do a regular jump, press Up/Toward or Up/Back. To do a long jump, press Down, Up/Toward or Down, Up/Back. To do a short jump (which only works in the two-player mode), press Toward, Down, Up/Toward. Keep in mind that jumping at your opponent is usually a bad idea, since every dino has an air counter-attack. Don't jump unless you're leaping over a projectile, or leaping over an airborne attack.
- You know how every fighting game has combos that players consider cheesy? *Primal Rage* has its own way of declaring which combos are dairy-laden: it flashes a slice of cheese on the screen with a red circle/slash "no" symbol).
- Every time a dino executes a combo, one or more of the cavemen in the background flies into the foreground, where you can smack them around or eat them by using your dino's Eat Humans move. Some dinos eat slower than others, and most dinos get hit by the opponent before they have a chance to scarf down the caveperson. You always start a match with at least three cavemen of your color, and depending on your point total, up to ten. The female cavers give you only 3% or 4% health, while the men give you 6%, 8%, or a whopping 12% (for the fat guy).
- It's possible for a dino to go berserk and do more damage with his moves than usual. There are two requirements. First, one dino's Life Blood Bar must be above the highest "notch" on the artery, and the other dino's Bar must be below the lowest

"notch." Second, the dino with the higher Blood Bar has to knock the dino with the lower Bar to the ground. When the dino gets up, he becomes berserk, as indicated by a flashing word underneath his name. (For example, Armadon's berserk word is SAMADHI.)

- As with most fighting games, the key to victory in *Primal Rage* is move combinations; you can do much more damage with a series of moves than with a single special move. We've printed a few basic combos for each character; try stringing together regular and special moves to make your own. If you execute a combo with at least four hits, which do at least 35% damage, the game gives you a reward of lightning flashes and (very wimpy) thunderclaps. The thunderclaps count out the number of hits in the combo (up to 10).

ARMADON

ARMADON
ARMADON

Special Moves

- Bed-O-Nails: Hold HF + LQ, Down, Up. Armadon curls up into a spiky ball. An excellent defensive move against jumping opponents and projectile attacks.
- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Up, Toward, Down. Armadon grabs an unfortunate caveperson with his tail and gobbles him like a wafer-thin mint.
- Flying Spikes: Hold HF + LF, Back, Up. Armadon shoots a nasty little group of spikes.
- Gut Gouger: Hold HQ + HF + LQ, Toward, Back. Armadon stirs around the intestines of his opponent and lobs him over his head.
- Hornication Uppercut: Hold HQ + HF + LQ, Down/Toward, Toward, Up/Toward. Armadon jumps into the sky and thrusts his horn to whack an airborne foe. (It also works on a grounded foe at close range.)
- Iron Maiden: Hold HF + LQ, Back, Up, Toward. Armadon leaps high into the air and uses his back to shred the head of his opponent. This is the most powerful special move in the game, so bust it out early and often.
- Rushing Uppercut: Hold HQ + LQ, Back, Down, Toward. Armadon rushes his opponent and pokes him hard in the gut with his horn. This move goes under most projectile attacks.
- Spinning Death: Hold HQ + LF, Back, Toward, Down. Armadon wheels across the screen. This move also goes under most projectile attacks.

FATALITIES

- Gut Fling: Hold HQ + HF + LQ, Down, Down, Down, Down, Up. Instead of merely standing over his defeated enemy, Armadon rips his chest open and starts flinging intestines over his head.
- Meditation: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back, Toward, Toward. Armadon curls up and zaps the opponent with an electric bolt.

BLIZZARD

BLIZZARD
BLIZZARD

Special Moves

- Air Throw: Hold HF + LQ. Both fighters have to be in the air and close to each other (not emotionally, just physically).
- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Back, Up, Toward, Down. Mmmm, cavemen taste like chicken.
- Freeze Breath: Hold HQ + HF + LF, Back, Toward. Blizzard exhales chilling halitosis that freezes the enemy for a few seconds.
- Ice Geyser: Hold HQ + HF + LF, Down, Up. Blizzard freezes his opponent with a wall of ice. The opponent has to be at close range (on the ground or in the air).
- Mega Punch (Fake): Hold HQ + LQ, Down, Up. Blizzard does the wind-up for a Mega Punch, but doesn't complete the move.
- Mega Punch (Long): Hold HF + LF, Back, Toward. This Mega Punch has the longest range, but it also takes a long time to recover after using it.
- Mega Punch (Quick): Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Back, Toward.
- Mega Punch (Short): Hold HQ + LQ, Back, Toward. Shorter range than the Long Mega Punch, but a slightly faster recovery time.
- You can use the Mega Punch moves to counter projectiles. Execute a Mega Punch as a projectile is about to hit you and you pass through the projectile to smack your opponent. The Quick Mega Punch only works against fast projectile attacks.
- Punching Bag: Hold HQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back, Up. Blizzard grabs his opponent and starts winding up with the other arm. Press HQ to strike with a quick jab, HF for a punch that sends the opponent flying, LQ for a harder, higher punch, and LF for a punch that sends the opponent almost off the screen. This move can't be blocked, but the opponent can break out of the grip by pressing Left and Right rapidly.
- Slide: LQ + LF + Down.
- Throw: Hold HF + LQ, Toward, Down, Back, Up. Blizzard grabs and throws the opponent. This move can't be blocked.

FATALITIES

- Brain Bash: Hold HQ + HF + LF, Down, Down, Back, Up, Toward. Blizzard pounds his opponent into the ground and then punches the walnut-sized brain out of his head.
- To-Da-Moon: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Down, Down, Down, Down, Up. Blizzard grabs the opponent, smacks him with a series of jabs, and then uppercuts him so hard that he flies into the background.

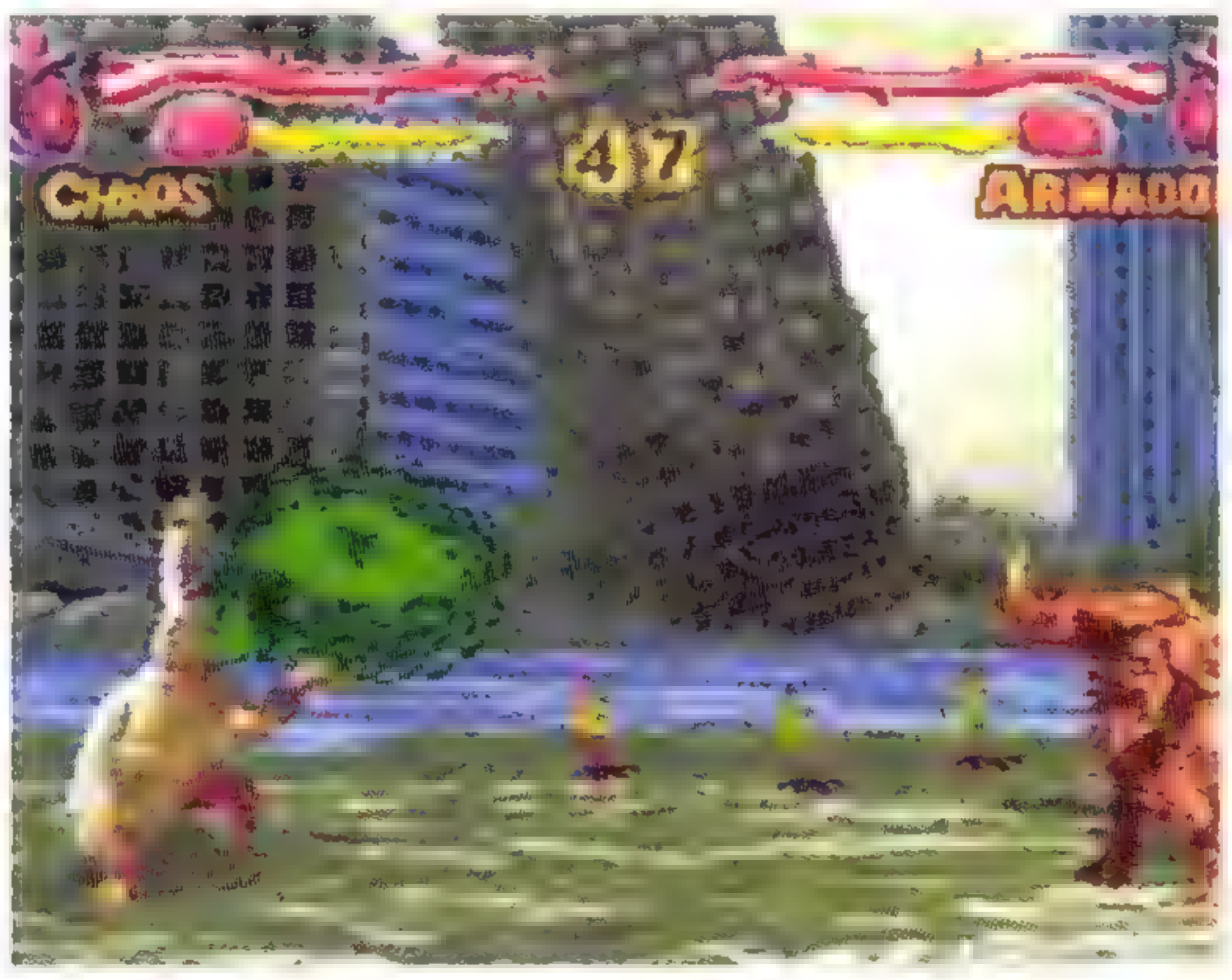
CHAOS

CHAOS
CHAOS

Special Moves

- Battering Ram: Hold HQ + LQ, Toward, Toward. Chaos lunges at his opponent to shoulder-tackle him. Use a Battering Ram when you and your opponent are at opposite sides of the screen so that it comes up just short. Your opponent usually blocks in anticipation of the Ram, allowing you to use an unblockable Grab And Throw.

- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back, Up. Cavemen: the dinosaur equivalent of Spam.
- Fart Of Fury: Hold HF + LQ, Down, Toward, Up, Back. Chaos does a handstand and lets loose a huge green toot that instantly dazes the opponent. Who says fighting games don't have class?



- Flying Butt Slam: Hold HF + LF, Down, Toward, Up, Down/Toward. Chaos jumps into the air and lands on his opponent buttocks-first, accompanied by a lovely farting noise.
- Grab And Throw: Hold HF + LF, Toward, Back. Chaos chokes his opponent and tosses him across the screen. This move can't be blocked. If you're knocked down and close to your opponent, use a Grab and Throw as you get up.
- Ground Shaker: Hold HF + LQ, Back, Back/Up, Back/Down. Chaos leaps into the air and smashes the ground so hard that he causes an earthquake that flings the opponent at him.
- Power Puke (Fast): Hold HQ + LF, Up, Toward. Chaos hurls a fast-moving ball of vomit (which is, we must admit, a lovely shade of green) at his opponent.
- Power Puke (Slow): Hold HF + LQ, Up, Toward. Same as the Fast Power Puke, except it ain't as fast.
- Slide: LQ + LF + Down.

FATALITIES

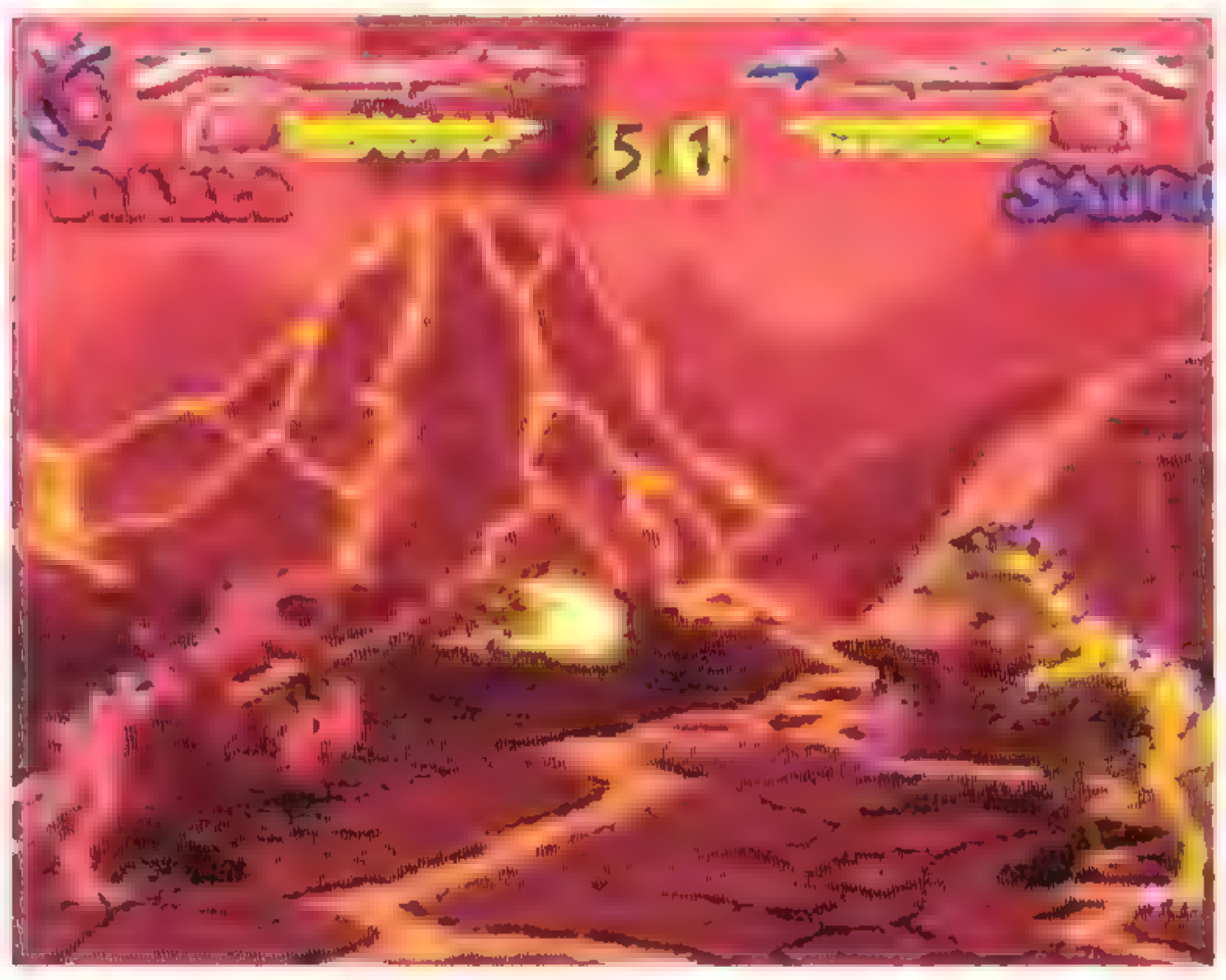
- Cannonball: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Down, Toward, Up, Down/Toward. Chaos jumps into the background and makes a splash. This fatality only works on the three stages with water in the background: Cove, Ruins and Strip.
- Churl: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Toward, Toward, Back, Back, Back. Chaos does a Slow Power Puke, walks off one side of the screen and onto the other and eats the Power Puke in mid-flight. Was this move entirely necessary?!
- Golden Shower: Hold HQ + LQ, Down, Down, continue holding HQ + LQ and hold HF + LF, Back, Toward, Back, Toward. Chaos takes a whiz on his fallen opponent and dissolves him into a pile of bones.

DIABLO

DIABLO
DIABLO

Special Moves

- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Down, Up, Down. How many fat grams do these cavemen have in 'em, anyway?
- Fireball (Fast): Hold HQ + LQ, Down, Toward. A quick-moving sphere of flame.



- Fireball (Slow): Hold HF + LF, Down, Toward. A not-so-quick-moving sphere of flame.
- Hot Foot: Hold HF + LF, Up/Back, Down/Toward. A powerful gout of flame that extends about halfway across the screen, scalding the opponent's feet.
- Inferno Flash: Hold HF + LQ + LF, Up. Diablo teleports behind his opponent.
- Mega Lunge: Hold HQ + LF, Down, Toward. Diablo runs forward and thrusts his head into the aiya like he just don't caiya. Use this move to pass under projectile attacks.
- Pulverizer: Hold HQ + LF, Up, Toward, Down. Diablo jumps into the air and pounces on his opponent a few times for good measure.
- Torch: Hold HQ + LQ, Up, Toward. Diablo exhales a short-range flame. Let go of the buttons as you press Toward to do a "fake" Torch.

FATALITIES

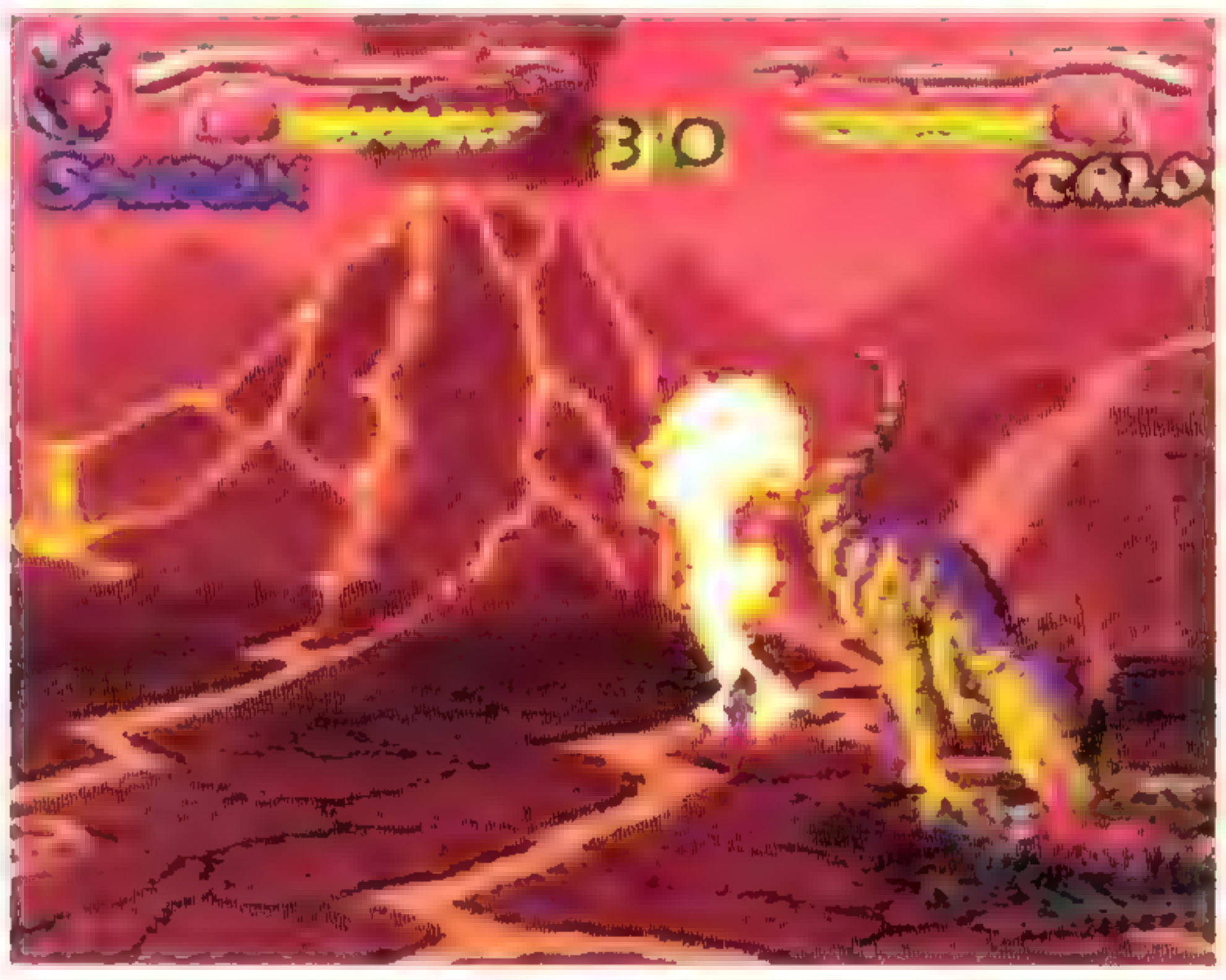
- Fireball: Hold HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Toward, Toward, Toward, Toward. Diablo shoots a massive fireball that slams into the opponent and causes small fires on the ground.
- Incinerator: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Up, Back, Down. Diablo cooks the flesh off his opponent, leaving naught but a skeleton.
- Infernal: Hold HQ + LQ + LF, Up, Down, Up, Down, Down. Diablo splits the earth beneath his opponent, who dissolves into a pool of lava.

SAURON

SAURON
SAURON

Special Moves

- Air Throw: Hold HF + LF. Both creatures must be in the air and close.
- Cranium Crusher: Hold HQ + LF, Down, Up. Sauron leaps head-first into the air. An excellent move to counter a jumping attack, but leaves you extremely vulnerable if you miss.
- Earthquake Stomp: Hold HQ + HF + LF, Up, Down. Sauron pounds the ground. This move can't be blocked and can be done in the air or on the ground.
- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Down, Down, Up. Sweet, like candy.
- Leaping Bone Bash: Hold HF + LQ, Down, Up, Down. Sauron pounces on his tasty-looking foe and bites off some meat. This move can't be blocked.



- Neck Throw: Hold HF + LF, Toward,

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Back. Sauron gives his opponent a painful hickey and tosses him across the screen.

- Primal Scream: Hold HQ + LQ, Down, Up. Sauron screams and creates an energy shield that makes projectiles go through it.
- Stun Roar: Hold HQ + LQ, Back, Toward. Sauron screams and an energy bolt flies at the opponent. Does little damage, but takes a lot off the Brain Stem Bar.

FATALITIES

- Carnage: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Back, Toward, Back, Toward, Back. Sauron bites through his opponent's jugular, causing a huge gush of blood.
- Flesh Eating: Hold HQ + LQ, Down, Down, keep holding HQ + LQ and hold HF + LF, Up, Up. Sauron gets cannibalistic (and funky).

49
SAURON CONQUERS

- Grape Crusher: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Up, Down, Up, Down, Down. Sauron jumps on his foe and splatters him into a particularly grotesque throw rug.

TALON

TALON
TALON

Special Moves

- Brain Basher: Hold HF + LQ, Back, Up, Toward. Talon flips in the air and pounces on his opponent's head.
- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back. Claw-lickin' good!
- Face Ripper: Hold HF + LF, Down, Toward. Talon jumps onto his opponent and gives him a flurry of bites. This move can't be blocked, but it also only works at close range.
- Frantic Fury: Hold HQ + LF, Down, Toward. Talon disappears in a blur of claws and rolls at his opponent.
- Jugular Bite: Hold HF + LF, Back, Toward. Talon jumps onto the opponent and bites his neck. This move can only be used after another move and at close range.
- Pounce And Flip: Hold HF + LQ, Toward, Down, Down/Toward. Talon runs, pounces, bites and flips backward, all in one smooth motion.
- Run Backward: Hold HQ + LQ, Hold Back.
- Run Forward: Hold HQ + LQ, Hold Toward.
- Slasher: Hold HQ + LQ + LF, Down, Toward. Talon delivers not one, but two nasty little claw swipes. An excellent move against jumping opponents.
- Slide (Long): LQ + LF + Down.
- Slide (Short): LF + Down.

FATALITIES

- Heart Wrenching: Hold HQ + LQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back, Up, Down. Talon rips out his opponent's heart and eats it.
- Shredding: Hold HQ + LF, Toward, Down, Back, Up, Toward. Talon spins into his opponent and leaves him looking like he got stuck in a ten-story-tall blender set on puree.
- Stampede: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Toward, Back, Up, Down. A flock of baby Talons runs onto the screen to chew chunks out of the opponent.

VERTIGO

Special Moves

- Air Teleport: Hold HF + LF, Down, Up. Vertigo teleports into the air above his opponent.
- Come Slither: Hold HQ + LQ, Back, Back.
- Eat Humans: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Down, Toward, Up.
- Scorpion Sting: Hold HF + LQ, Toward, Toward. Vertigo lashes all the way across the screen with her tail. Execute this move to pass through a projectile and hit the opponent.
- Teleport: Hold HF + LF, Down, Down. Vertigo pulls a disappearing and reappearing act.
- Venom Spit (Fast): Hold HF + LF, Toward, Toward. A speedy poisonous loogie.
- Venom Spit (Slow): Hold HQ + LQ, Toward, Toward. It's not fast, but it certainly is a poisonous loogie.
- Voodoo Spell: Hold HF + LQ, Back, Back. Vertigo instantly dazes his opponent, but only if he's at close range. Execute this move when the opponent is getting up to catch him off guard.

FATALITIES

- La Vache Qui Rit: Hold HQ + HF + LQ + LF, Back, Back, Back, Down, Toward. Vertigo uses the Voodoo Spell to turn her opponent into a cow, disproving the long-held scientific theory that dinosaurs are lactose-intolerant.
- Petrify: Hold HF + LF, Back, Back, Back, keep holding HF + LF and hold HQ + LQ, Toward, Toward. Vertigo turns her opponent into stone and tail-whips him into rubble.
- Shrink and Eat: Hold HF + LF, Back, Back, Back, keep holding HF + LF and hold HQ + LQ, Down, Up. Vertigo makes her opponent really, really small and then swallows him without even bothering to chew.

SECRET TIPS

- BOWLING: In a two-player game, both players should choose Armadon. During the fight, both Armadons should do the Spinning Death move and collide in mid-spin three times in a row. After the third collision, a bowling game appears with cavemen as the pins. Move the control pad to control Armadon.
- FALLING COWS: In a two-player game, one (or both) players should choose Chaos. Play until you reach the Ruins stage (with the buildings in the background). Set up a Sudden Death situation by having one player win the first round and the other player win the second. Now, if you let the timer run down to zero without having either player hit the other, you go into Sudden Death mode.
- Here's the tricky part: When the timer is almost at zero—ideally, between one and two seconds left—have Chaos cut a Fart Of Fury. If the Fart is still in the air when the timer hits zero, notice that instead of bricks falling from the sky, there are big ol' moo cows plunging into the background river.
- VOLLEYBALL: In a two-player game, play until you reach the Cove stage (the beach with the temples on both sides). When a caveman runs into the foreground after a combo, swat him into the air to your opponent, who should hit it back to you. After a few passes, a volleyball net appears, complete with a referee on a tall chair. You lose the point if you eat the "ball."

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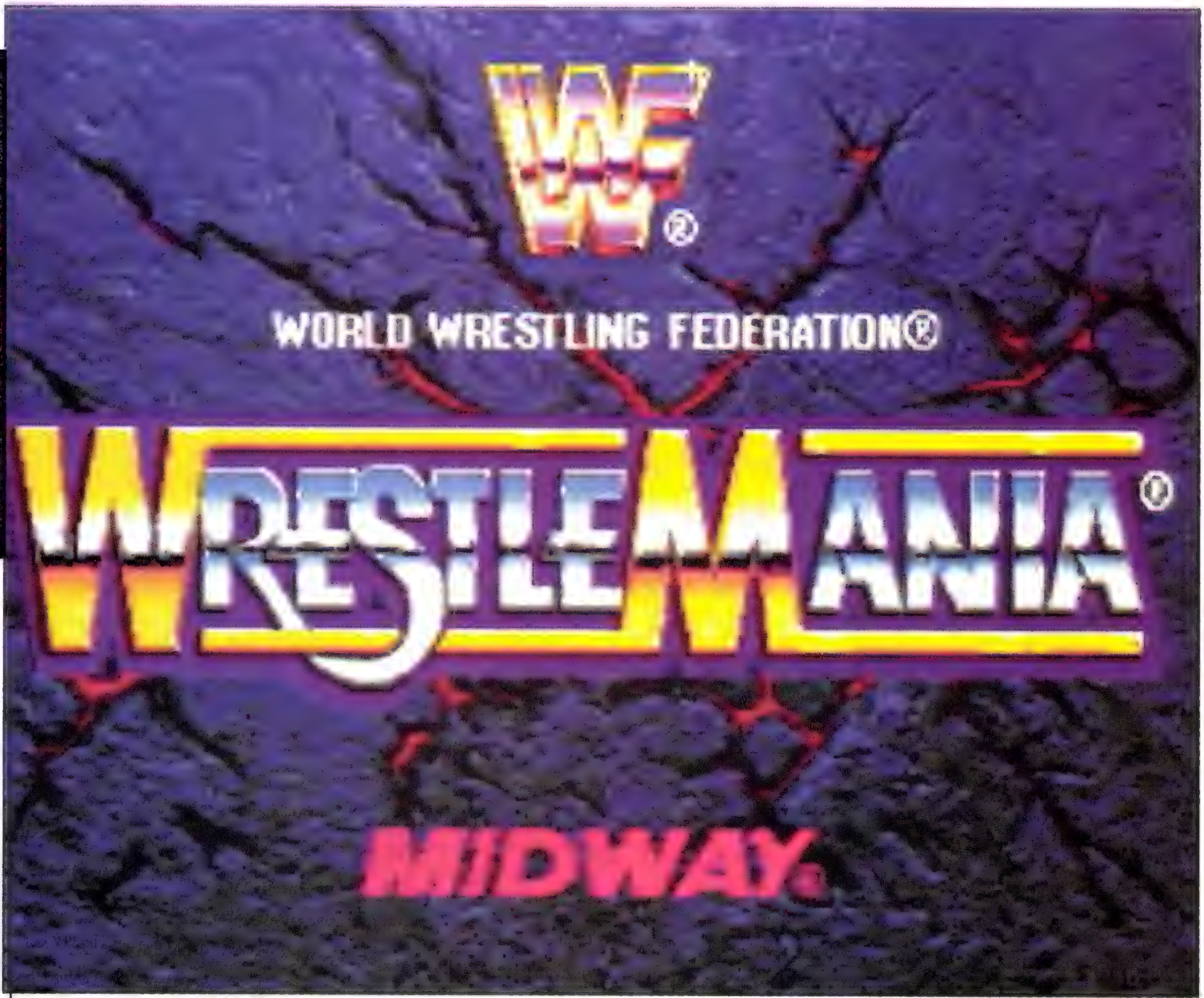
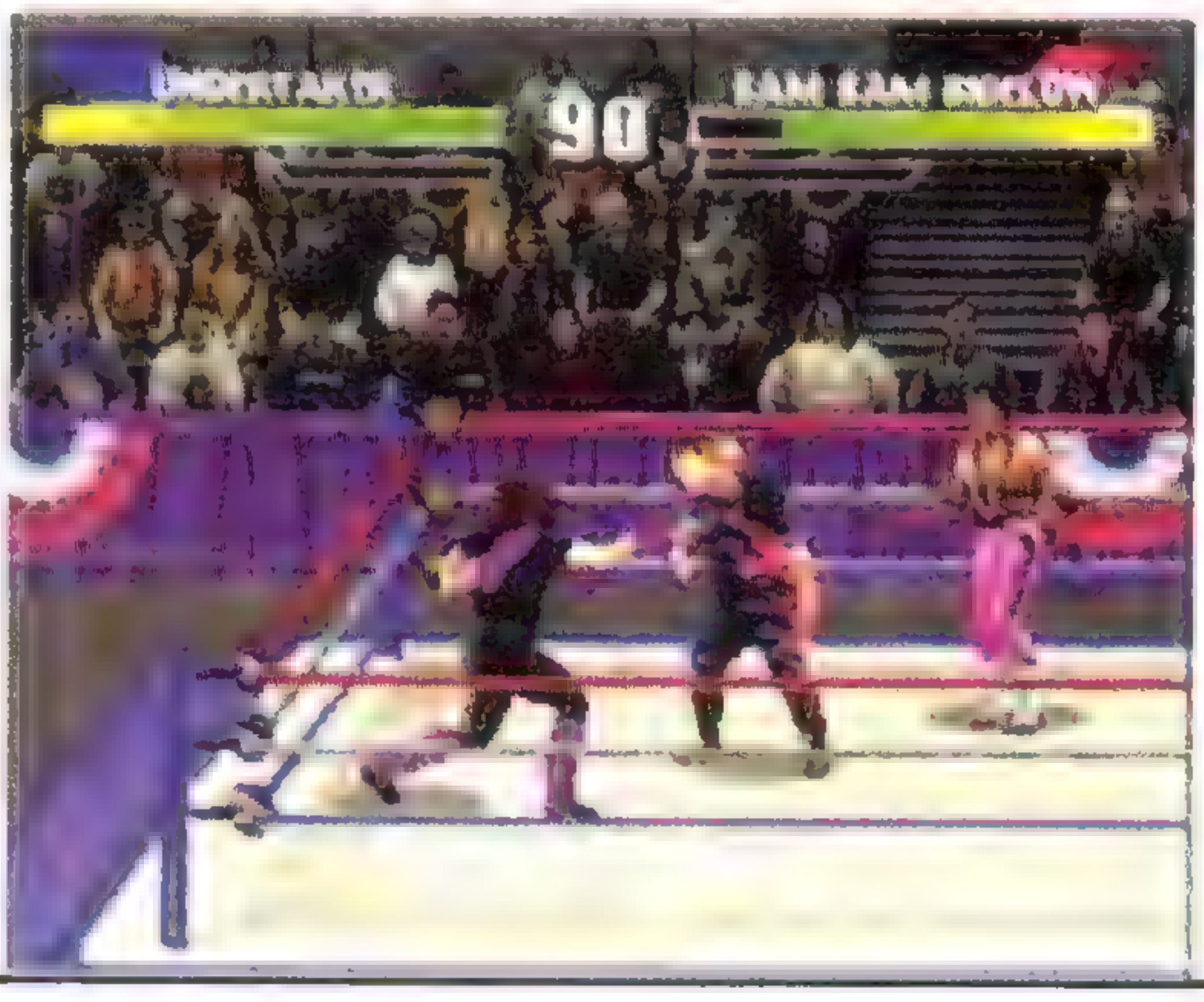
WWF WRESTLEMaNIa



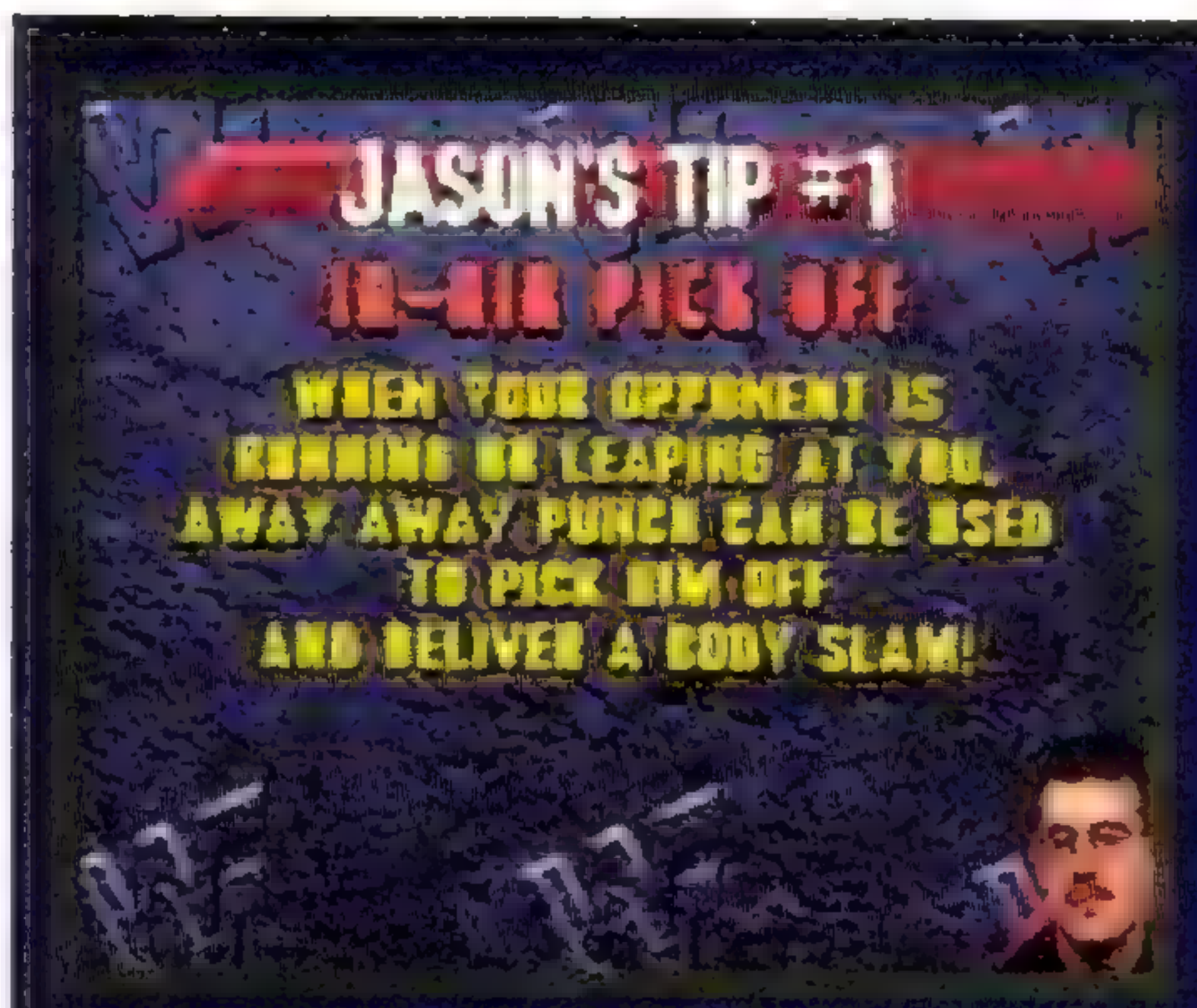
A plethora of moves and tips from Acclaim's red-hot *WWF WrestleMania* PlayStation game to help you fulfill your dreams of being a diaper-wearin', greasy-haired, steroid-pumped pro wrestler.

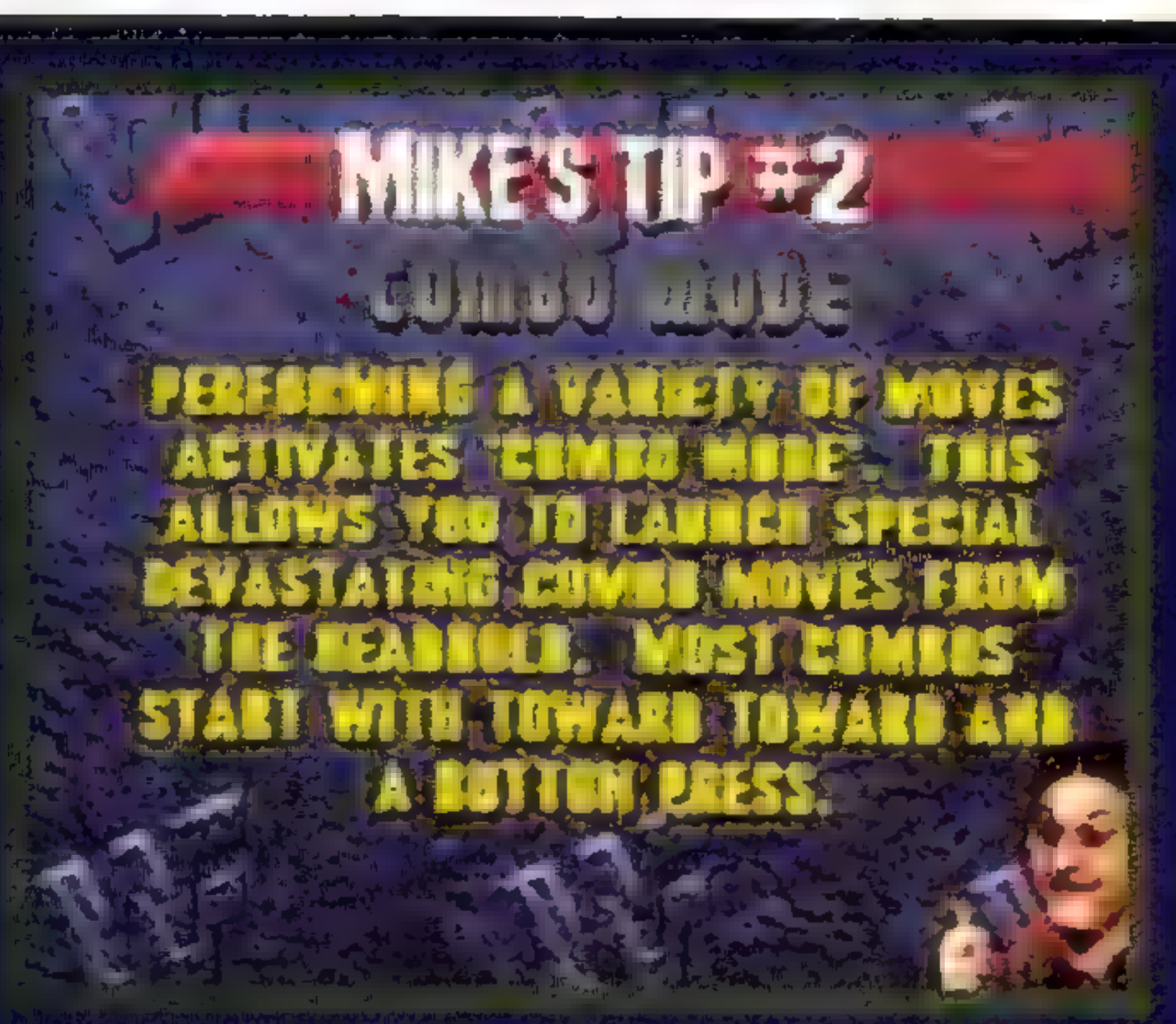
Basic Strategies

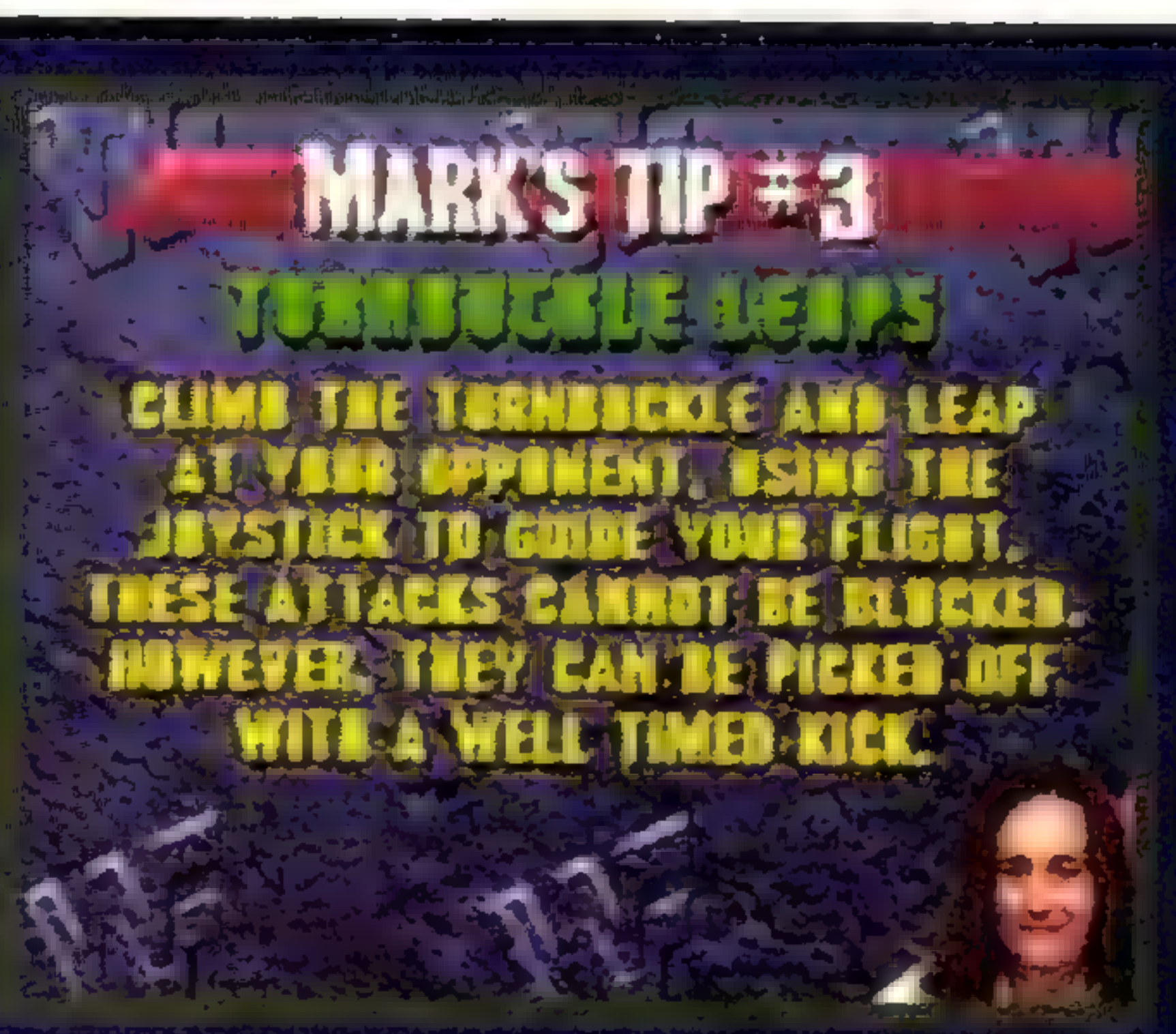
- When you're fighting more than one wrestler, keep your back to the ropes to avoid getting attacked on both sides.
- Charge moves—that is, moves in which you hold the button—are more powerful if your wrestler is running rather than standing still.
- You can activate a turbo mode by spinning the controller 360 degrees counterclockwise. Your wrestler blinks to indicate that you have super-de-duper speed for several seconds. You can only use this trick once per match.

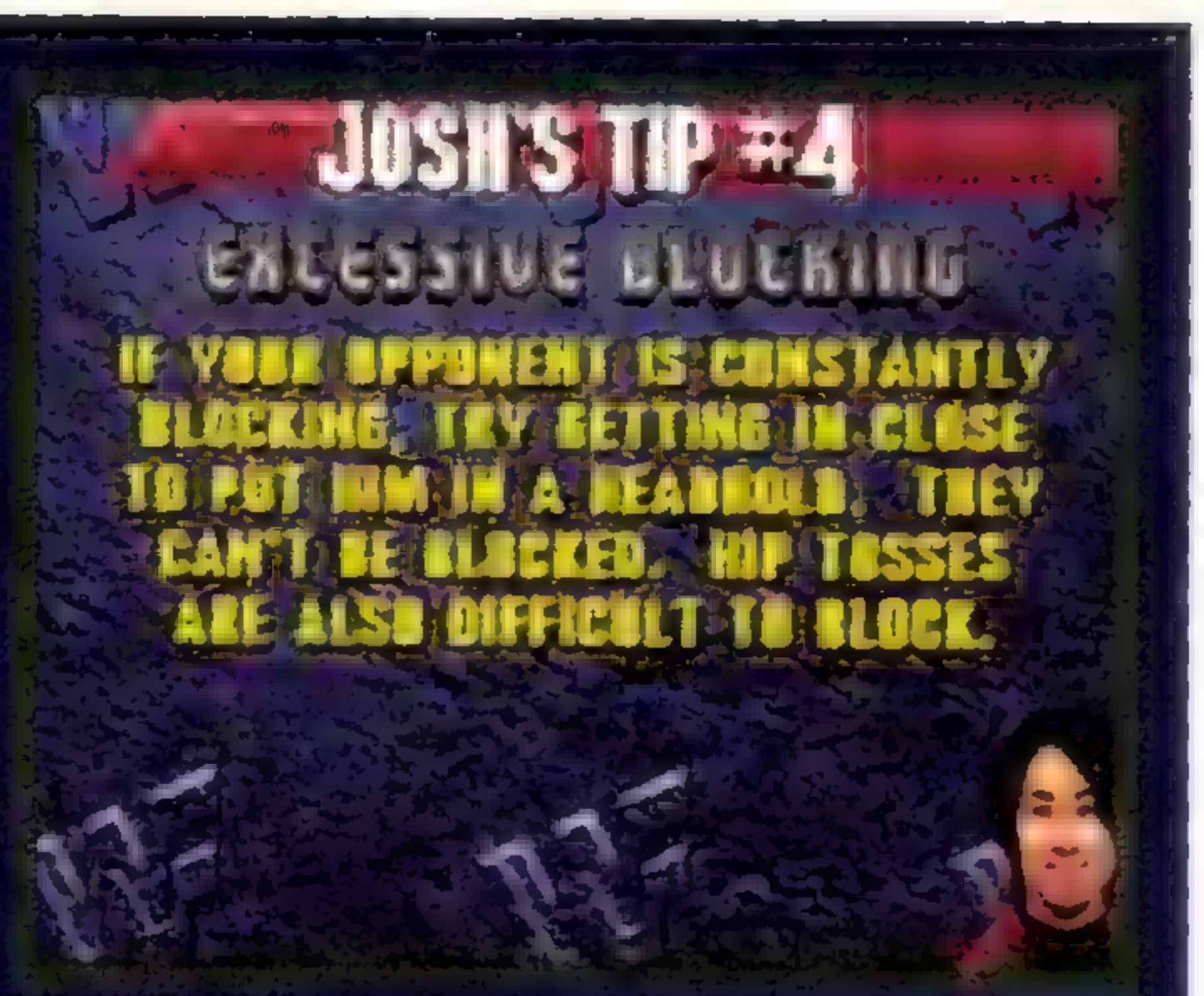


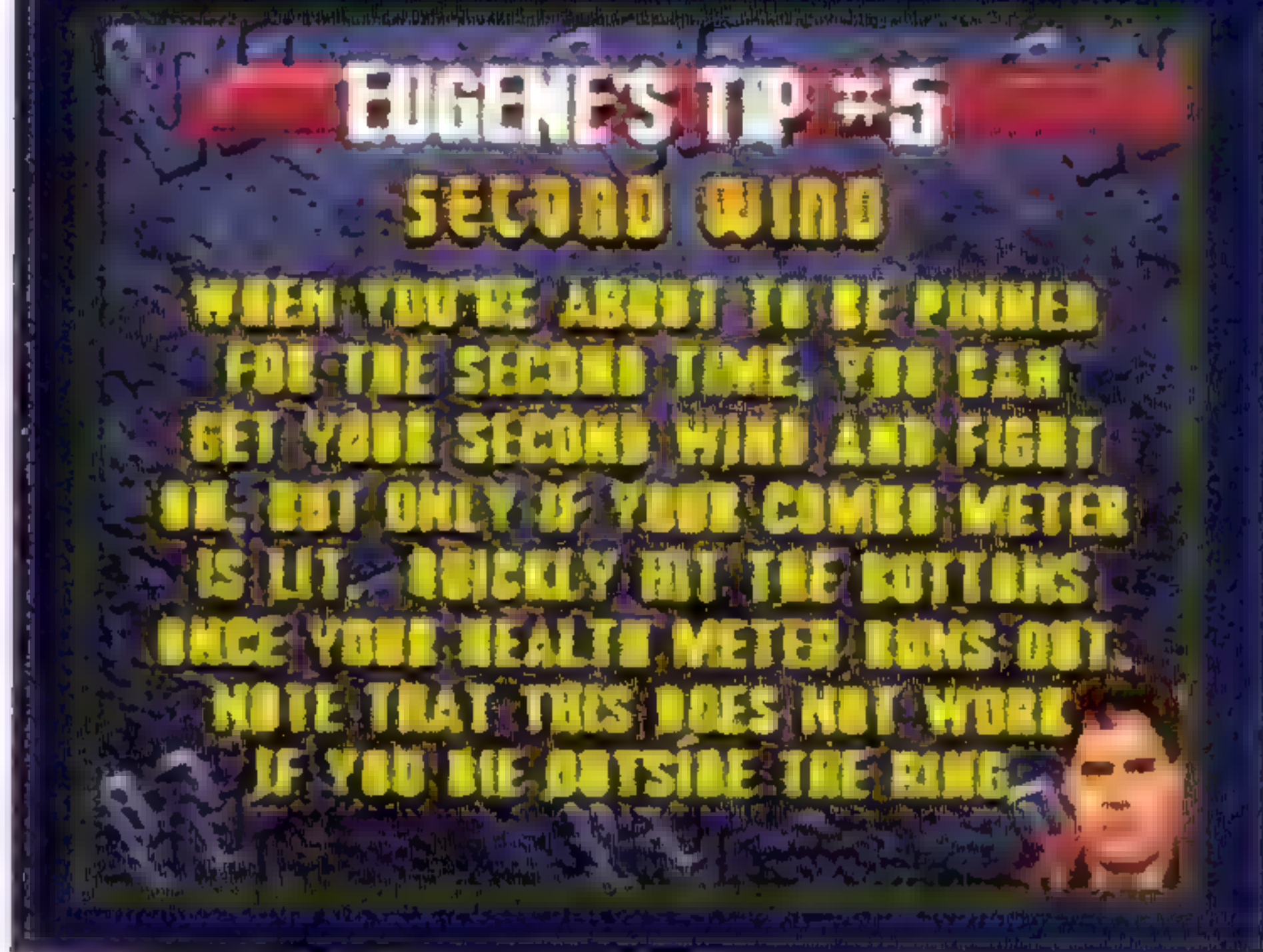
- Taunt your opponent by holding Block and circling the controller 360 degrees clockwise Toward. After the taunt, you have five seconds to land any move and do 4X damage.
- If you let the game demo itself, the various programmers of *WrestleMania* appear on the screen to dole out game tips.

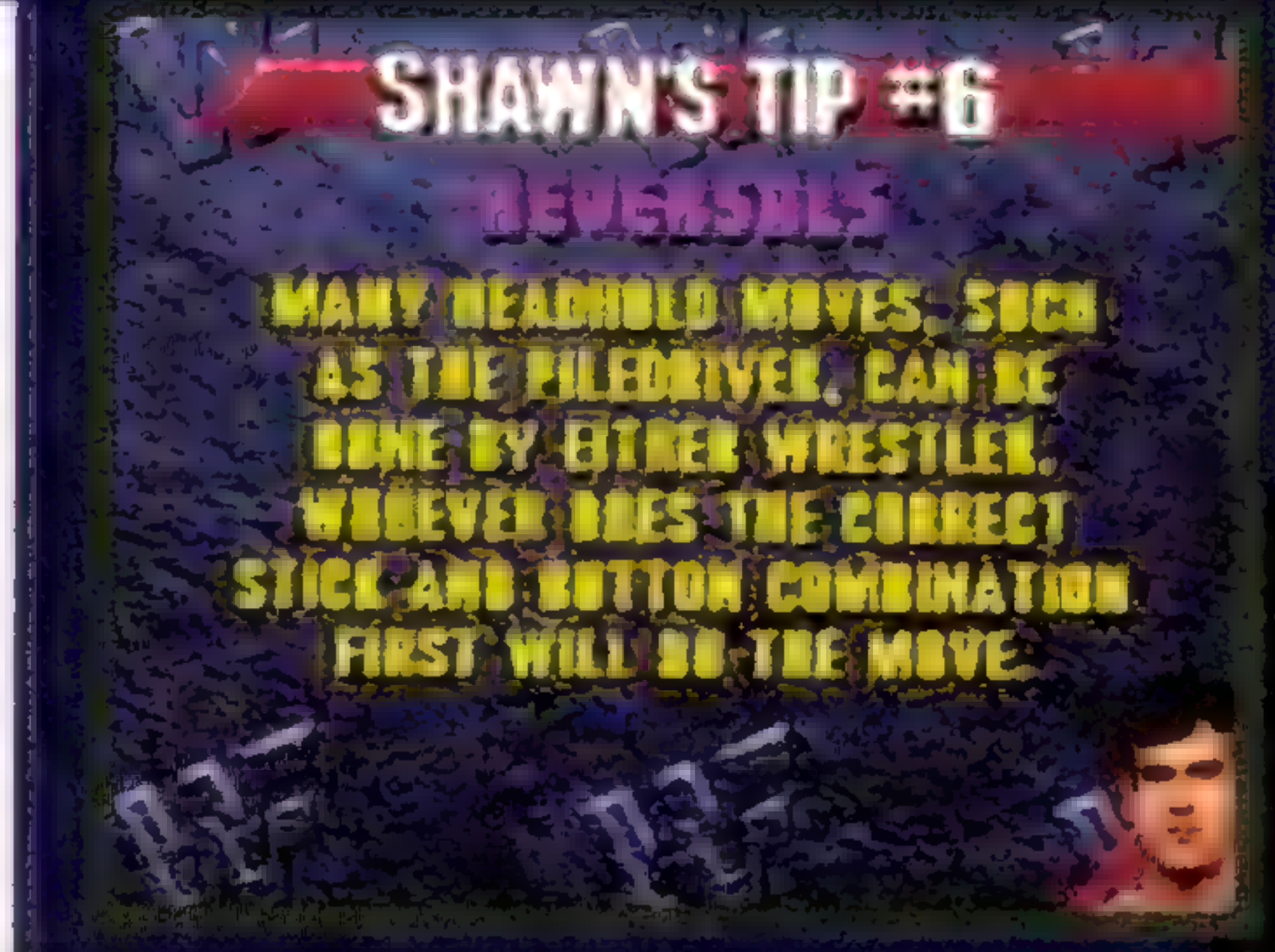

JASON'S TIP #1
IN-AIR PICK OFF
WHEN YOUR OPPONENT IS
RUNNING OR LEAPING AT YOU,
AWAY AWAY PUNCH CAN BE USED
TO PICK HIM OFF
AND DELIVER A BODY SLAM!


MIKE'S TIP #2
COMBO MODE
PERFORMING A VARIETY OF MOVES
ACTIVATES 'COMBO MODE'. THIS
ALLOWS YOU TO LAUNCH SPECIAL
DEVASTATING COMBO MOVES FROM
THE HEADHOLD. MOST COMBOS
START WITH TOWARD TOWARD AND
A BUTTON PRESS.


MARK'S TIP #3
TURNBUCKLE LEAPS
CLIMB THE TURNBUCKLE AND LEAP
AT YOUR OPPONENT, USING THE
JOYSTICK TO GUIDE YOUR FLIGHT.
THESE ATTACKS CANNOT BE BLOCKED.
HOWEVER, THEY CAN BE PICKED OFF
WITH A WELL TIMED KICK.

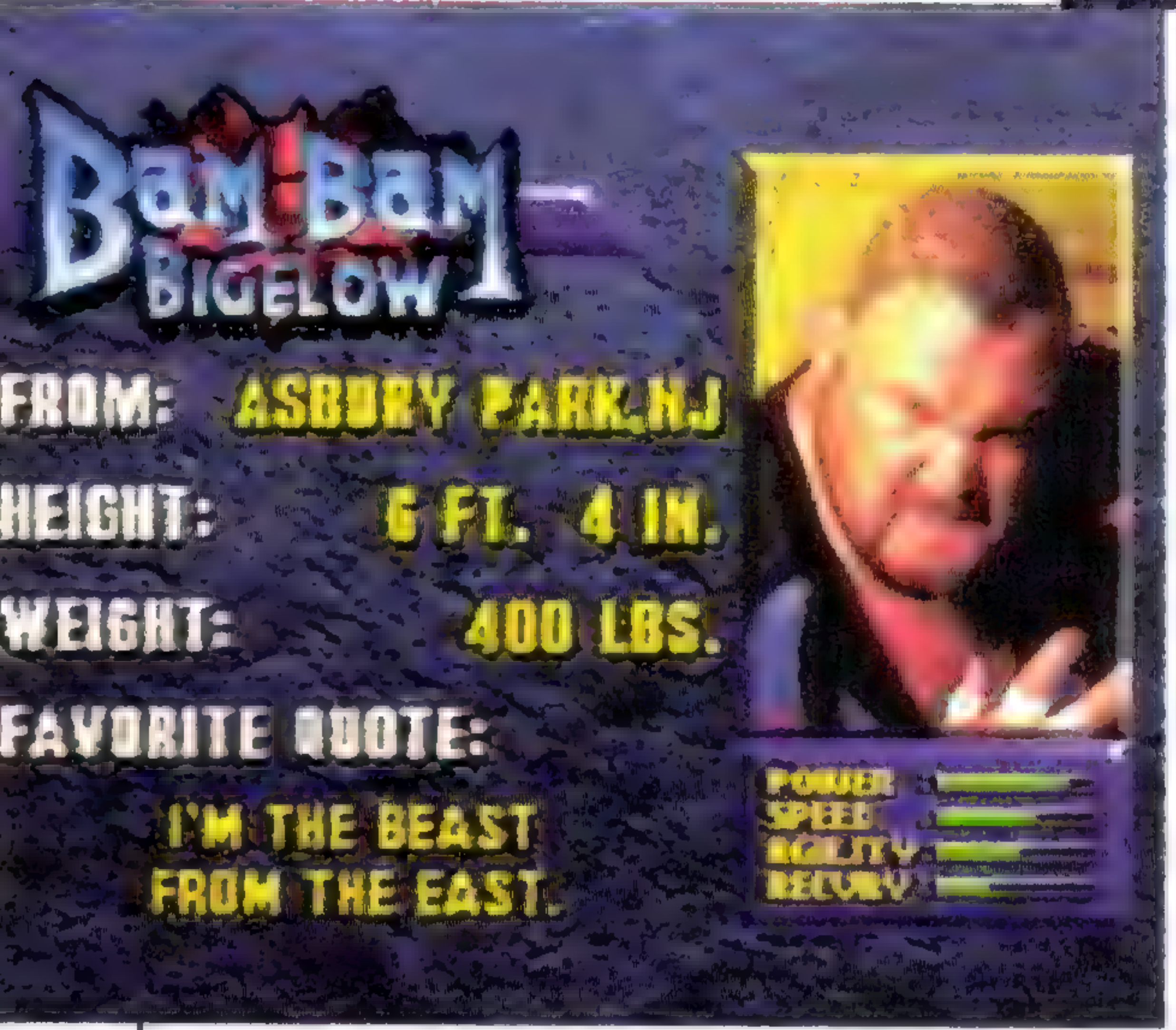

JOSH'S TIP #4
EXCESSIVE BLOCKING
IF YOUR OPPONENT IS CONSTANTLY
BLOCKING, TRY GETTING IN CLOSE
TO PUT HIM IN A HEADHOLD. THEY
CAN'T BE BLOCKED. HIP TOSSES
ARE ALSO DIFFICULT TO BLOCK.


EUGENE'S TIP #5
SECOND WIND
WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE PINNED
FOR THE SECOND TIME, YOU CAN
GET YOUR SECOND WIND AND FIGHT
ON, BUT ONLY IF YOUR COMBO METER
IS LIT. QUICKLY HIT THE BUTTONS
ONCE YOUR HEALTH METER RUNS OUT.
NOTE THAT THIS DOES NOT WORK
IF YOU DIE OUTSIDE THE RING.


SHAWN'S TIP #6
REVERSALS
MANY HEADHOLD MOVES, SUCH
AS THE PILEDRIVER, CAN BE
DONE BY EITHER WRESTLER.
WHOEVER DOES THE CORRECT
STICK AND BUTTON COMBINATION
FIRST WILL DO THE MOVE.

CHARACTER MOVES

Bam Bam Bigelow

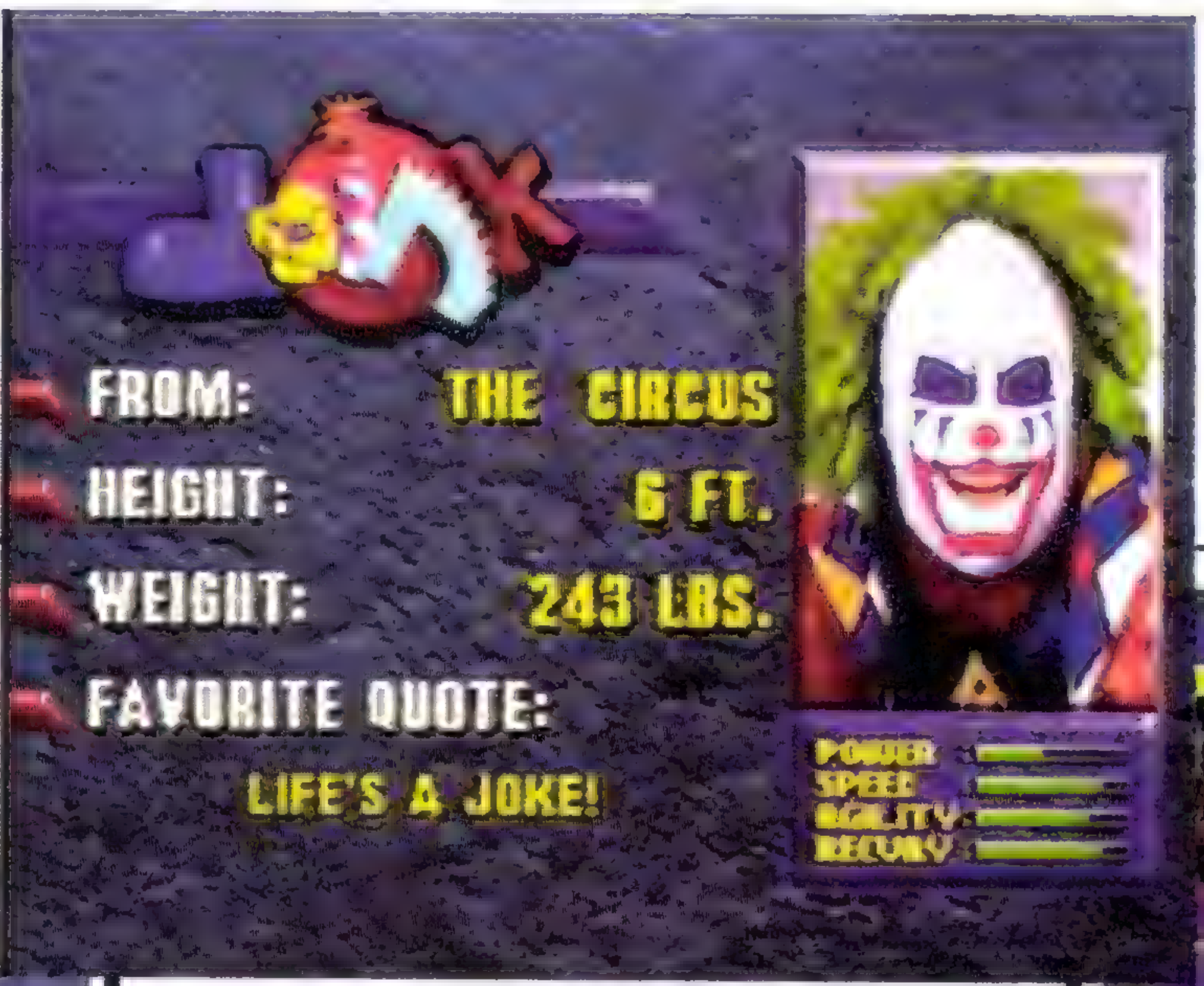


FROM: ASBURY PARK, NJ
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 4 IN.
WEIGHT: 400 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
I'M THE BEAST FROM THE EAST.

- Overhead Smash: PP + PK

BAM BAM BIGELOW
66
LEX LUGER

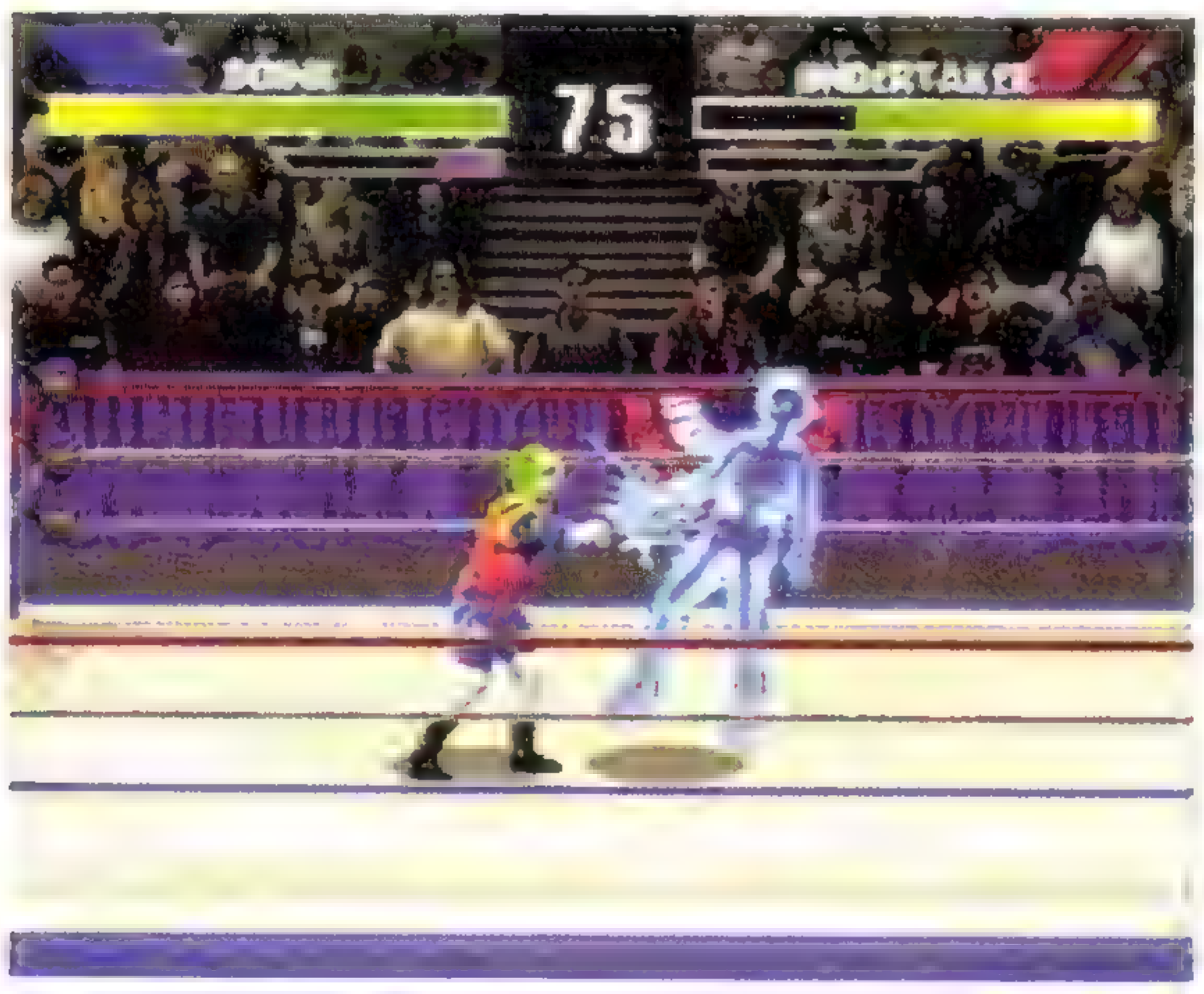
- Back Drop: Away, Away + P
- Fire Punch: Hold P two seconds, release and tap P
- Flying Dropkick: Run, K or PK
- Jump Kick: Away, Away + PK
- Neckbreaker: Hold PP two seconds, release
- Super Clothesline: Run, P or PP



FROM: THE CIRCUS
HEIGHT: 6 FT.
WEIGHT: 243 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
LIFE'S A JOKE!

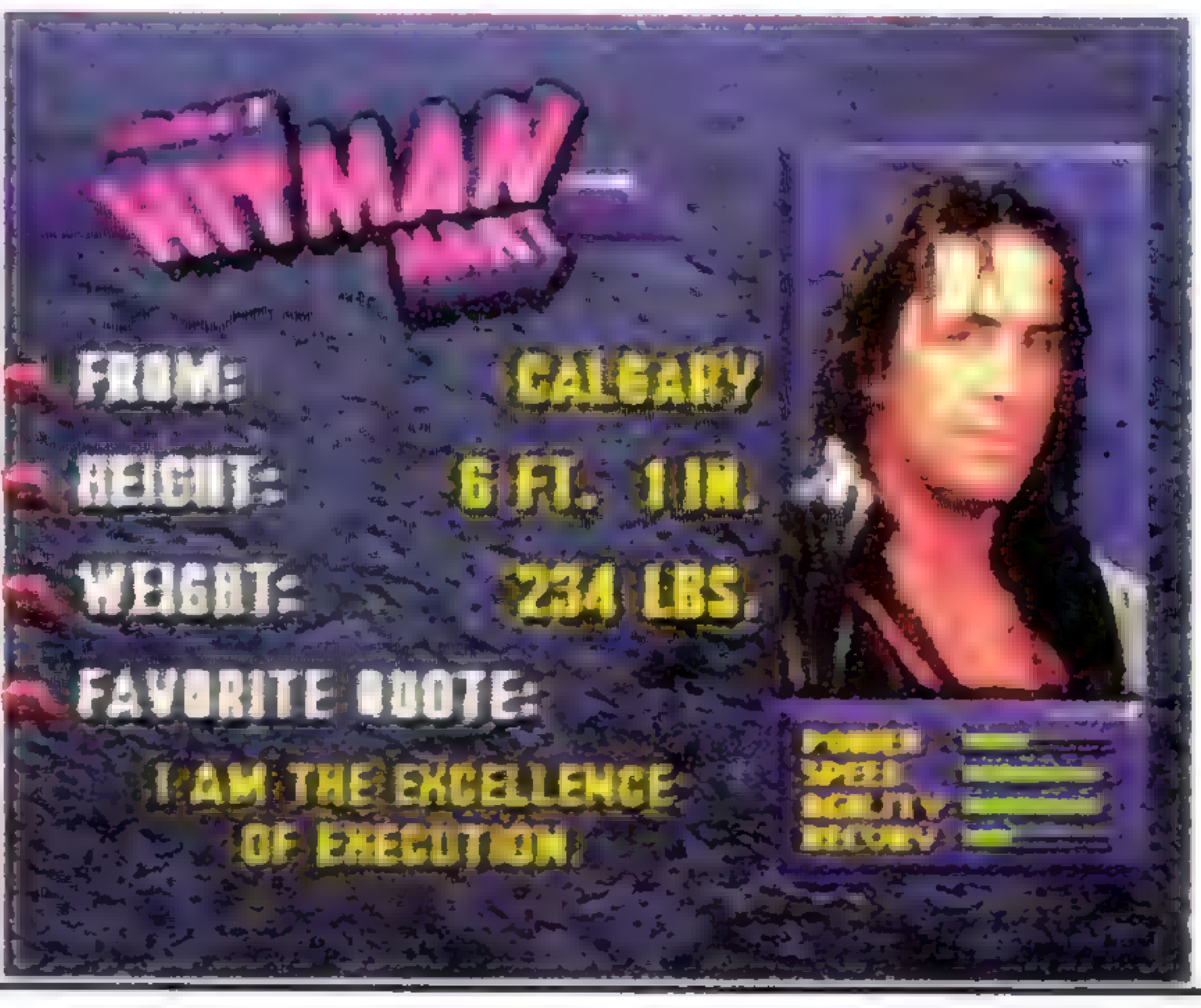
Doink

- Ear Slap: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + P. Tap P for multiple Slaps
- Happy Hammer: Toward, Toward + PK
- Head Slam: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Down, Down + PK
- Hip Toss: Away, Away + P
- Joy Buzzer: Hold P two seconds, release

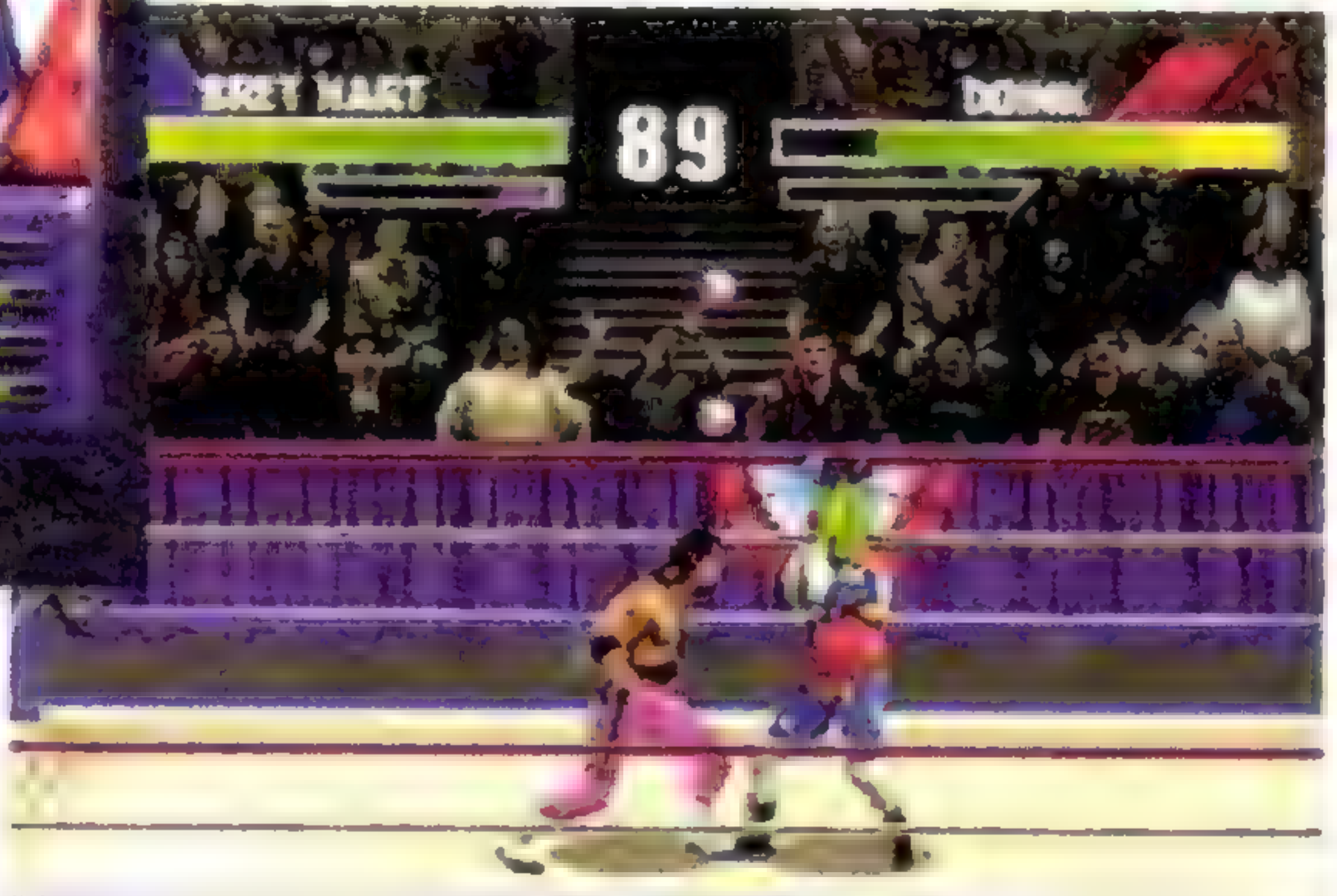


- Super Clothesline: Run, P or PP

Bret "Hitman" Hart

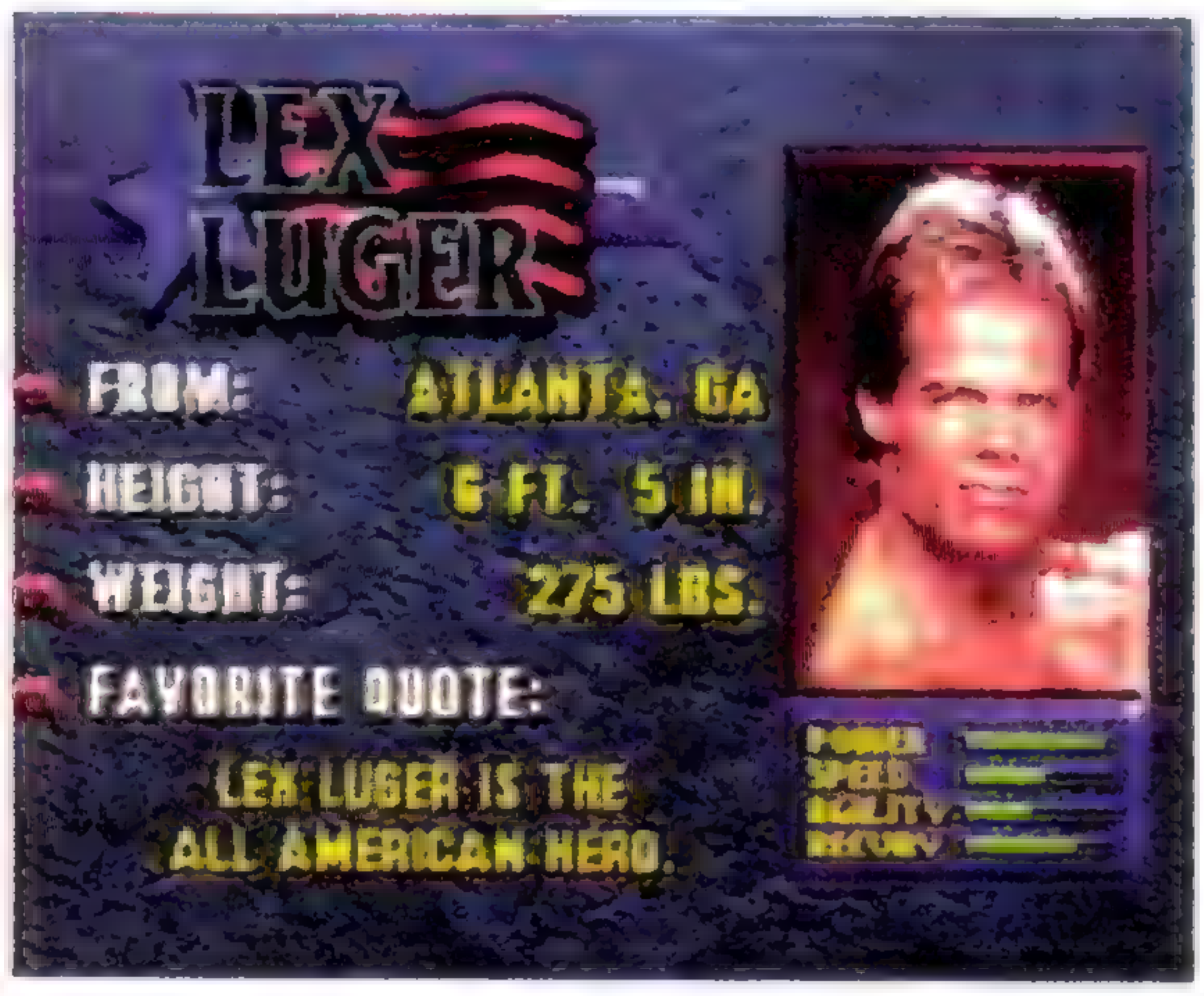


FROM: CALGARY
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 1 IN.
WEIGHT: 234 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
I AM THE EXCELLENCE OF EXECUTION.



- Eye Rake: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + P
- Arm Drag: Away, Away + P
- Flying Clothesline: Run, P or PP
- Flying Dropkick 2: Run, PK
- Flying Kick: Away, Away + PK
- Quadruple Slam: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Away, Down, Toward + P, tap P
- Quadruple Uppercut: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Toward + P, tap P
- Rolling Uppercut: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + PP
- Sharpshooter: PP while standing next to feet of opponent on mat

Lex Luger



FROM: ATLANTA, GA
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 5 IN.
WEIGHT: 275 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
LEX LUGER IS THE ALL AMERICAN HERO.

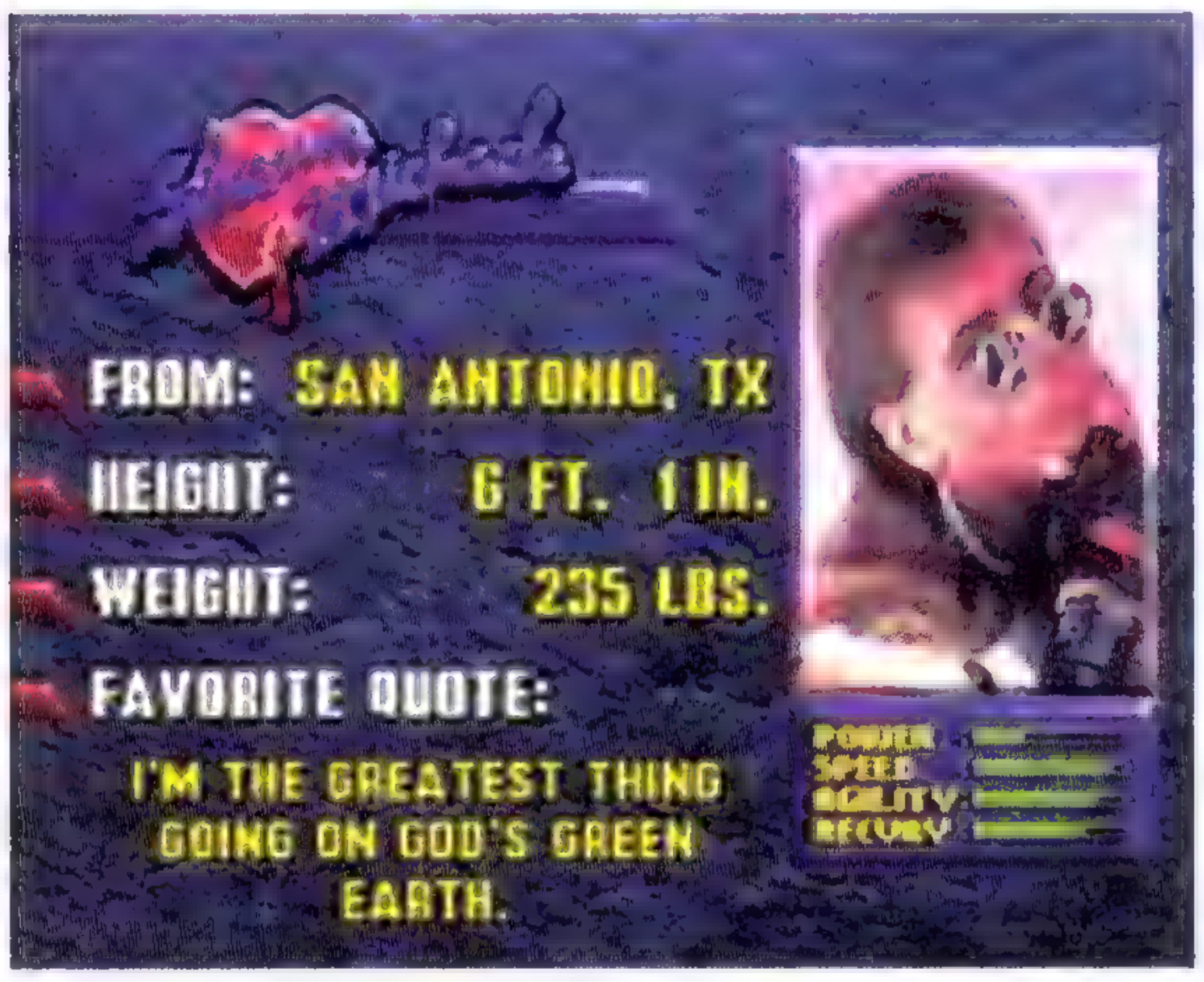
- Ball and Chain: Toward, Toward + PK, tap K
- Crusher: Hold P two seconds, release

- •Double Axehandle Smash: PP next to opponent
- •Hip Toss: Away, Away + P
- •Power Grab: PP + PK
- •Rebel Rack: Power Grab, Up + PK
- •Sliding Elbow: Toward, Toward + P

LEX LUGER
87
RAZOR RAMON

- •Vertical Suplex: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Toward, Toward + PP

Shawn Michaels


Shawn Michaels
POWER
SPEED
AGILITY
RECOVRY

FROM: SAN ANTONIO, TX
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 1 IN.
WEIGHT: 235 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
I'M THE GREATEST THING GOING ON GOD'S GREEN EARTH.

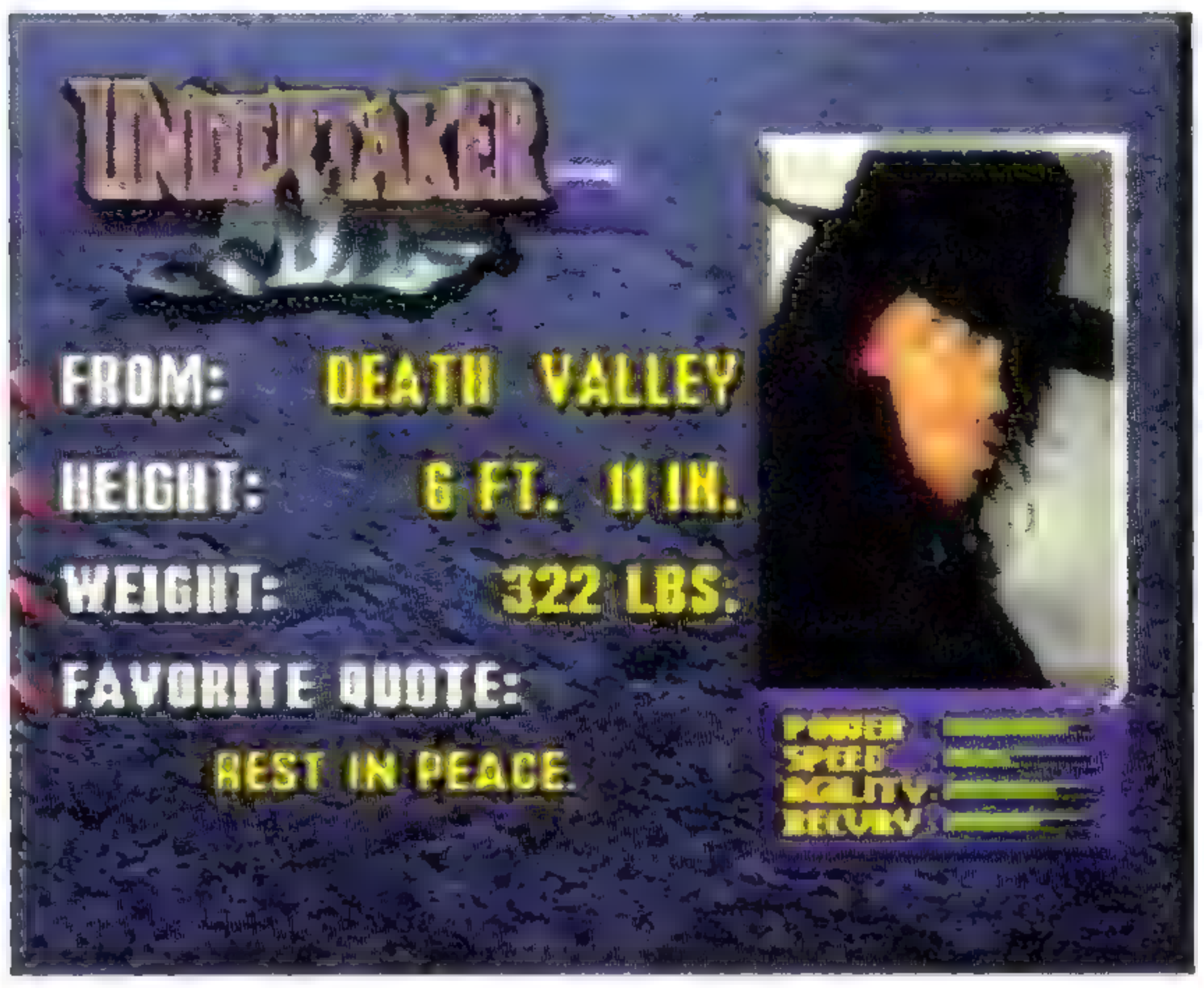
- •Bodyslam: Away, Away + P
- •Front Leg Trip: Toward, Toward + K
- •Headbutt: Head Hold, Down, Down/Toward, Toward + PP
- •Inverted Scissor: Toward, Toward + PK

SHAWN MICHAELS
92
BRET HART

- •Speed Kick: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + K, tap K
- •Sunset Flip: Run, P

The Undertaker

- •Dropkick: Run, K or PK
- •Neck Bender: Hold P two seconds, release
- •Sliding Chokehold: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + P


UNDERTAKER
POWER
SPEED
AGILITY
RECOVRY

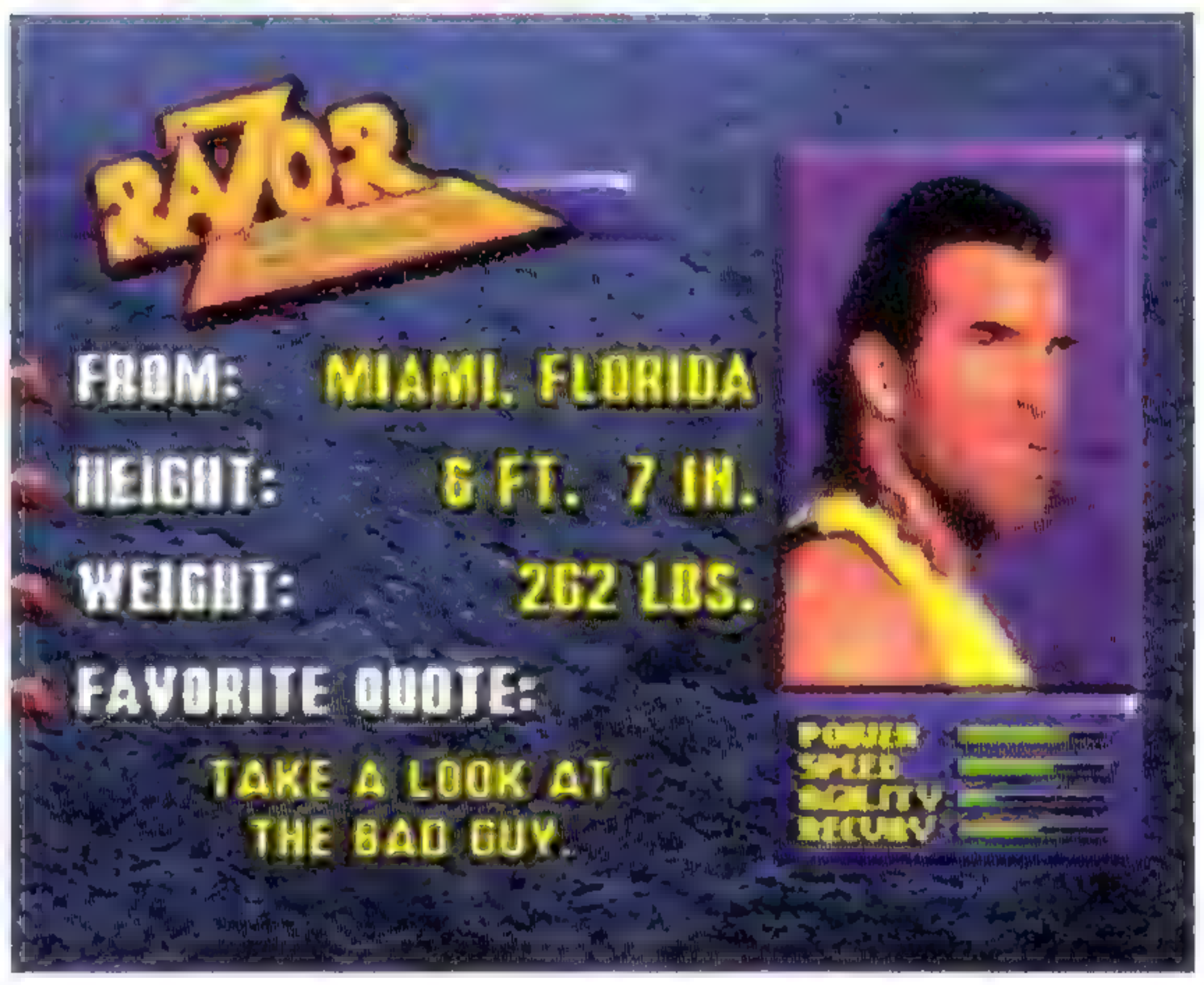
FROM: DEATH VALLEY
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 11 IN.
WEIGHT: 322 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
REST IN PEACE

- •Snap Mare: Back, Back + P
- •Spirit Stun 1: Down, Down/Away, Away + K

UNDERTAKER
66
SHAWN MICHAELS

- •Spirit Stun 2: Away, Down, Toward + K
- •Super Uppercut: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Down + PP
- •Tombstone Slam: Toward, Toward + PK

Razor Ramon


RAZOR
POWER
SPEED
AGILITY
RECOVRY

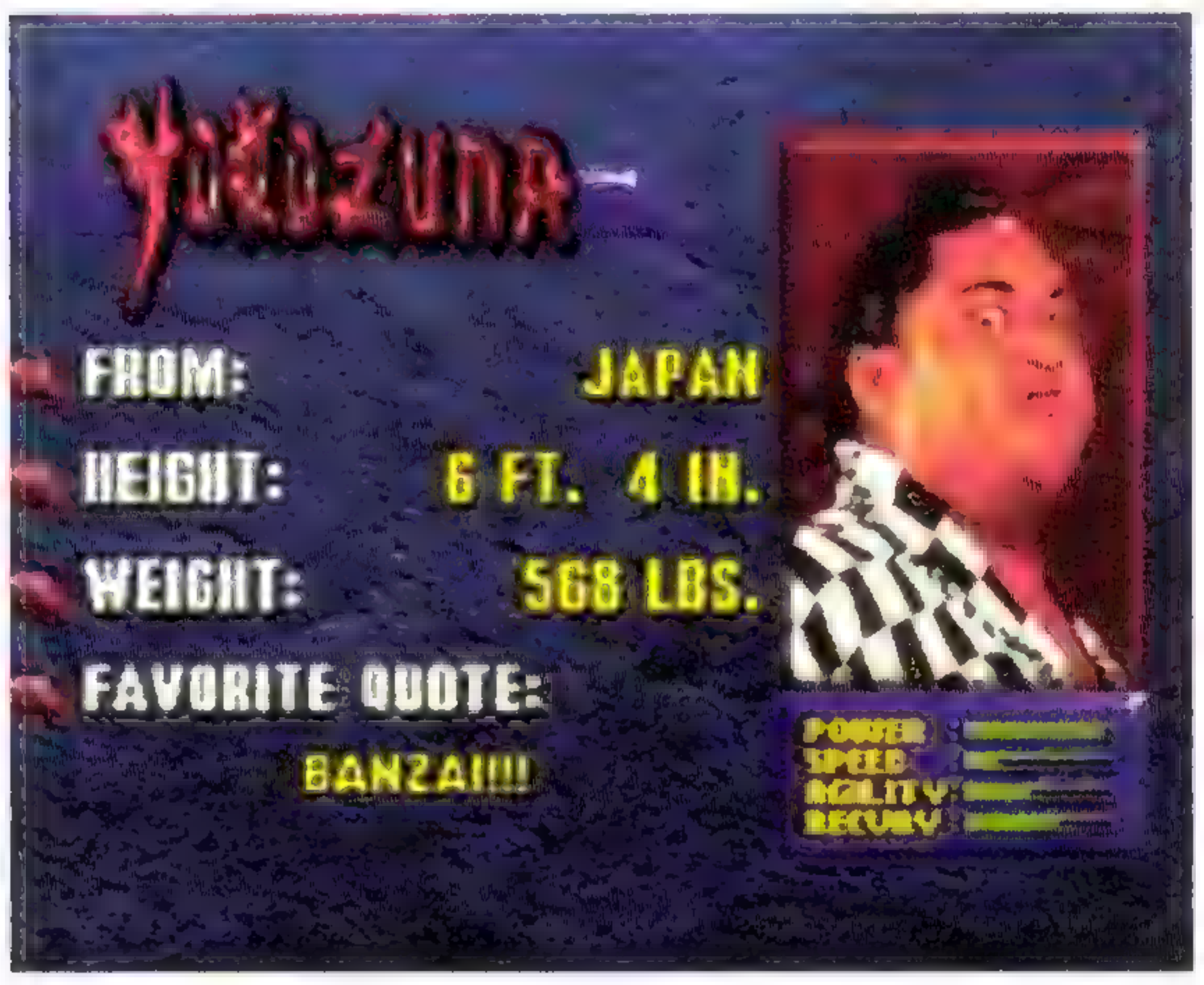
FROM: MIAMI, FLORIDA
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 7 IN.
WEIGHT: 262 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
TAKE A LOOK AT THE BAD GUY.

- •Hip Toss: Away, Away + P
- •Overhead Slice: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + P

RAZOR RAMON
91
YOKOZUNA

- •Piledriver: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Down, Down + PK
- •Razor's Edge: Head Hold, Toward, Toward + P
- •Razor Swipe: Head Hold, Up + P or Down + P
- •Rug Slam: Toward, Toward + K, tap K
- •Slice 'N Dice: Hold P two seconds, release
- •Uppercut: Head Hold, Down + P

Yokozuna


YOKOZUNA
POWER
SPEED
AGILITY
RECOVRY

FROM: JAPAN
HEIGHT: 6 FT. 4 IN.
WEIGHT: 568 LBS.
FAVORITE QUOTE:
BANZAI!!!

- •Belly Bounce: Toward, Toward + P
- •Bucket Slam: PP
- •Quick Jab: Down, Down/Toward, Toward + P, tap P
- •Scissor Smash: Toward, Toward + PK
- •Suplex: Head Hold (Toward, Toward + PP), Down, Down + PK
- •Salt Throw: Hold P two seconds, release

YOKOZUNA
76
BAM BAM BIGELOW

WWF Coin-Op Secrets

•ADAM BOMB: To access *WrestleMania*'s hidden character, just beat the game in the heavyweight division with all eight normal characters.

•FINISHING MOVES: The arcade version of *WWF* has five finishing moves. Here's how to do the Undertaker's: Win the third round of a match and stay on the left side of the screen. Stand directly over your opponent and press Up, Down, Down, P.

•SECRET CODES: Enter these codes at the match-up screen:

Buddy Mode: Block, Block, Block, Block, hold Block
Drone Meters: PK, K, PK, hold K
Move Names On: P, P, P, hold P
No Blocking: Block, Block, hold Block

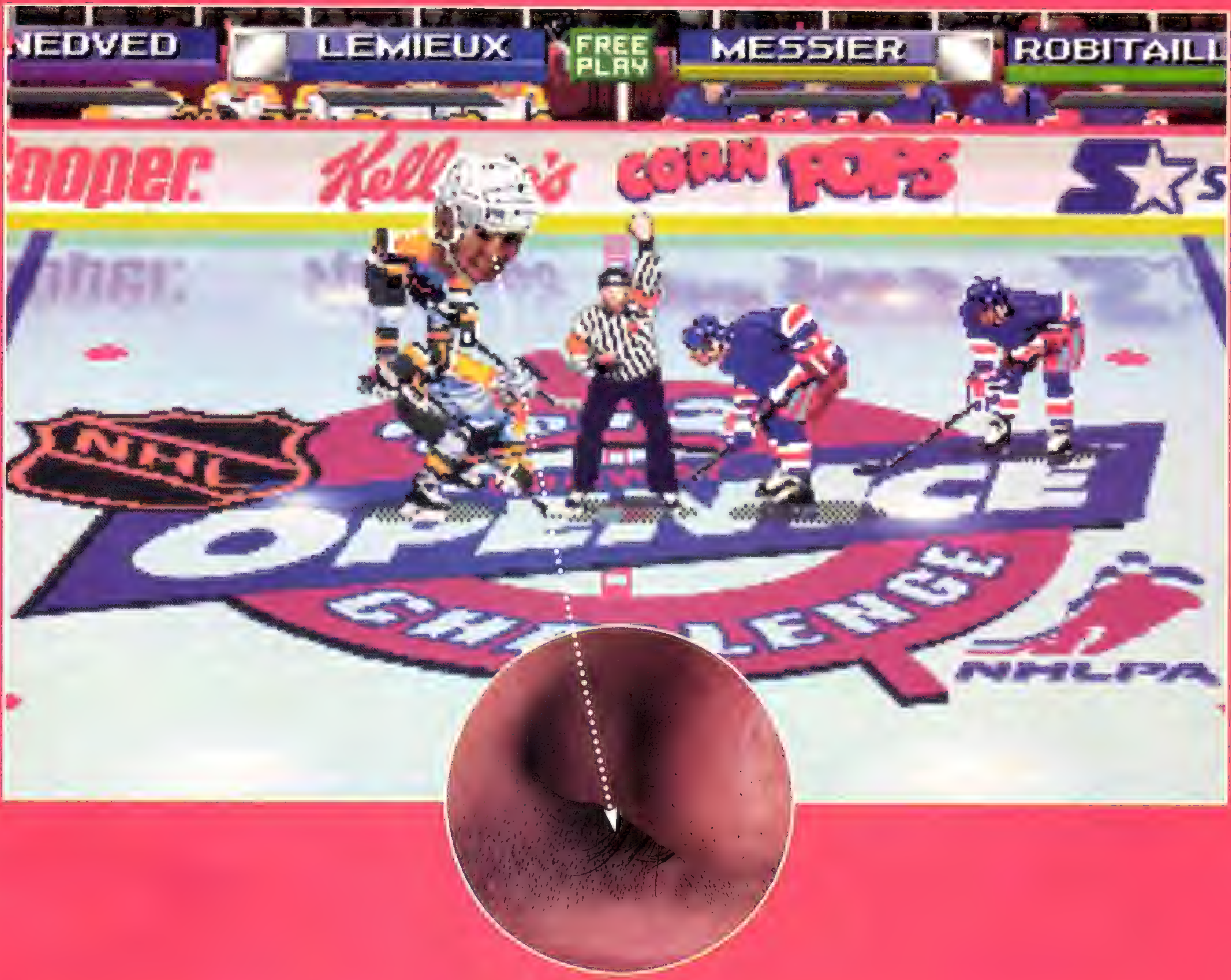


Fig. 1. Nose hair.

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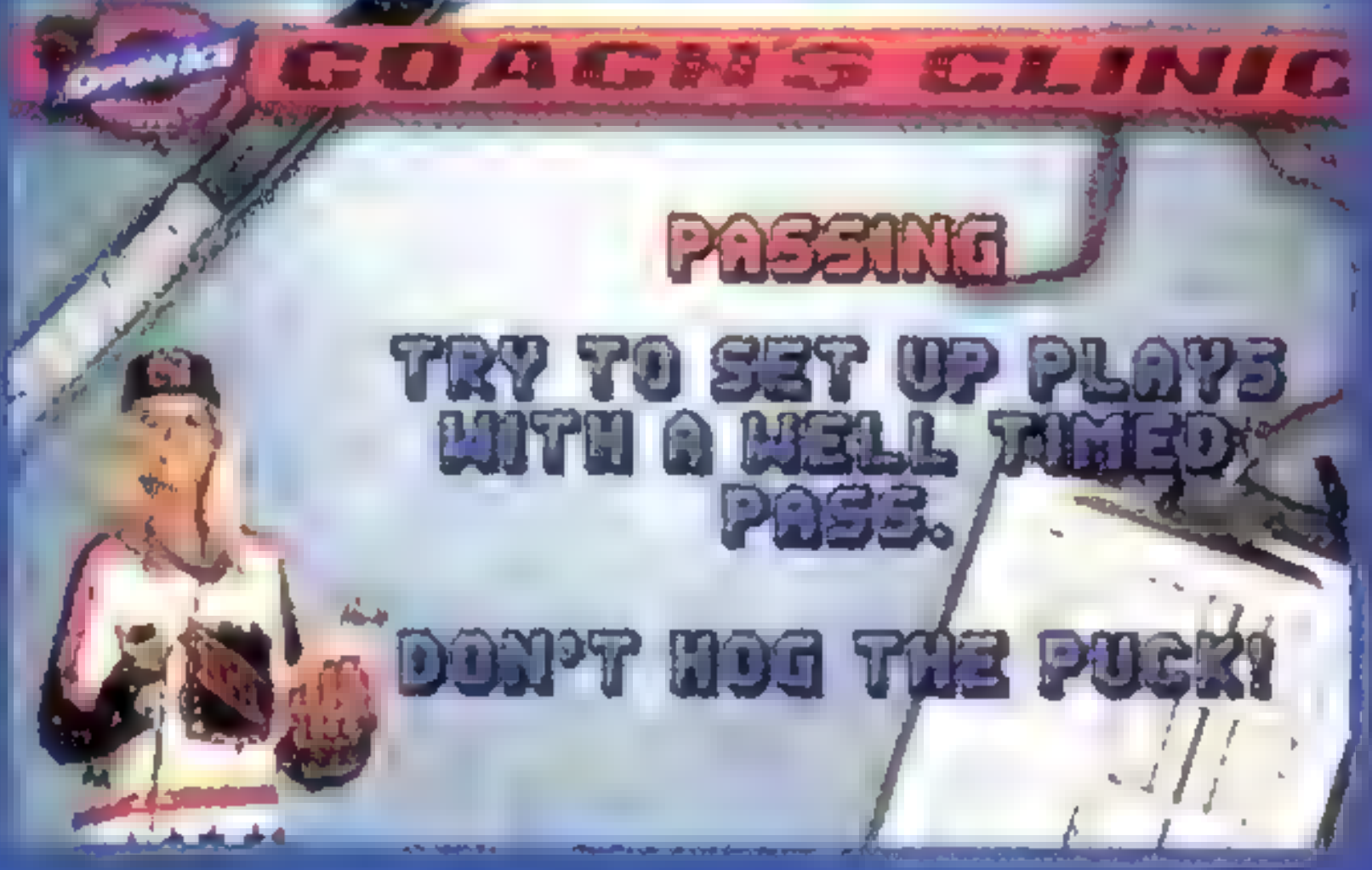
He's on fire!



COACH'S CLINIC

PASSING

TRY TO SET UP PLAYS WITH A WELL TIMED PASS.

DON'T HOG THE PUCK!

Sharpen your skills!

Big Save!

2 ON 2 OPEN ICE CHALLENGE

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CABINET FEVER

by e-glide

TERMINATOR 2 JUDGMENT DAY
MIDWAY
T2
TERMINATOR 2 JUDGMENT DAY
MIDWAY
T2

Tired of walking the streets aimlessly in search of a working **Galaga** coin-op? Do you long for the days when you could trot on down to the local pizza parlor and sink a few quarters into ***Jungle Hunt***? If so, then it's time you started building your very own arcade. Read on—and learn how.

Okay. So you've finally admitted that you have a problem. You miss those early-Eighties arcade classics you poured endless quarters into as a kid so much that now you absolutely *must* own an original version of *Defender*, *Robotron 2084*, *Asteroids* or *Donkey Kong*. Computer or Super Game Boy remakes of the original games no longer do the trick.

Well, you're suffering from what's known as "Collector's Jones"—a serious ailment that all would-be video game collectors endure just before they take the plunge. This article will give you some starting points for becoming a collector, but be warned: collecting classic arcade games can be extremely habit-forming and requires space—lots and lots of space. The staff of FLUX can not be held responsible for any domestic crises caused, in whole or in part, by numerous coin-op machines appearing in your home. So tell your mother not to call and yell at us when the path to the washing machine suddenly gets blocked by a *Galaga* upright.

If you're curious about building a collection of original arcade games, the following guidelines should help you get started.

1) COST

Fortunately, many older games now considered classics (those made between 1979 and 1984), like *Battlezone*, *Tempest*, *Defender*, *Asteroids*, *Pac-Man*, etc., can be had for relatively small amounts of money compared to more modern games like *Virtua Fighter* and *Sega Rally*. Prices for these old machines generally range from $200 to $800, depending on the game, condition and place of purchase. Most beginning collectors who look for a specific machine (usually their all-time favorite) are particularly susceptible to unscrupulous dealers out to make a killing. This is why it's extremely important to be informed as to the rough market value of the games you're interested in, as well as their availability and ease of maintenance. For example, older games which employ vector monitors (*Asteroids*, *Battlezone*, *Star Castle* and Atari's *Star Wars*) are difficult to keep running due to the unreliability of their vector monitors and the fact that this type of monitor is no longer made, making it difficult to obtain parts.

Research is the key here; find out some background history and going prices on the games you're interested in before plunking down cash. Of course, if you have serious electronics skills, this is likely to be much less of an issue. However, for most of us, it can be a big deal, so make sure you are willing to get involved in some degree of maintenance. After all, any games that come under the "classic" heading are definitely going to be at least 10 to 15 years old, and may require some upkeep and/or repairs.

2) WHERE TO FIND THEM

1. The first place you'll probably want to try is your local yellow pages, under "Amusements" and "Vending Machines."

2. Another tactic is to visit your local arcade and check the sides of machines for stickers that say "For service, call 555-5555," or something similar. Make a note of these numbers and try calling.

3. Replay magazine, a coin-op trade journal, can be helpful in locating good sources for games and parts. Their address is: Replay Magazine, P.O. Box 2550, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

4. Auctions. These can either be great sources for older games or a complete waste of time, depending on which ones you attend. Check Replay Magazine or your local newspaper to find out when and where the next auction is.

5. The Internet. If you have Net access, try the Usenet newsgroup "rec.games.video.arcade.collecting"—it is generally populated by knowledgeable and friendly people who can be immensely helpful in your quest for classic games. Just be sure to phrase your questions intelligently and take the time to learn how things are done there before posting a message. This is important. Don't simply blunder in and post "clueless newbie" messages (e.g. "Where can I get a *Centipede* cheap?") as it will only work against you and annoy the people in the group. Read a few posts over a couple of days and get the feel of how things are done before joining in.

If you have World Wide Web access, you can try the Video Arcade Preservation Society Home Page at http://www.vaps.org, which is a home to a wealth of valuable collecting-related information (historical text files, switch settings and pinouts for many games and a searchable database) and links, including other collectors' pages. Two very helpful documents which can be found there are "How to buy from an operator" and "How to buy from an auction," both of which are essential reading for beginning collectors.

Another helpful site is well-known technical guru Randy Fromm's Amusements International Magazine at http://w3.the-group.net/~aim. This home page offers quite a bit of essential technical info and contacts for game and parts distributors. Definitely worth checking out.

Williams
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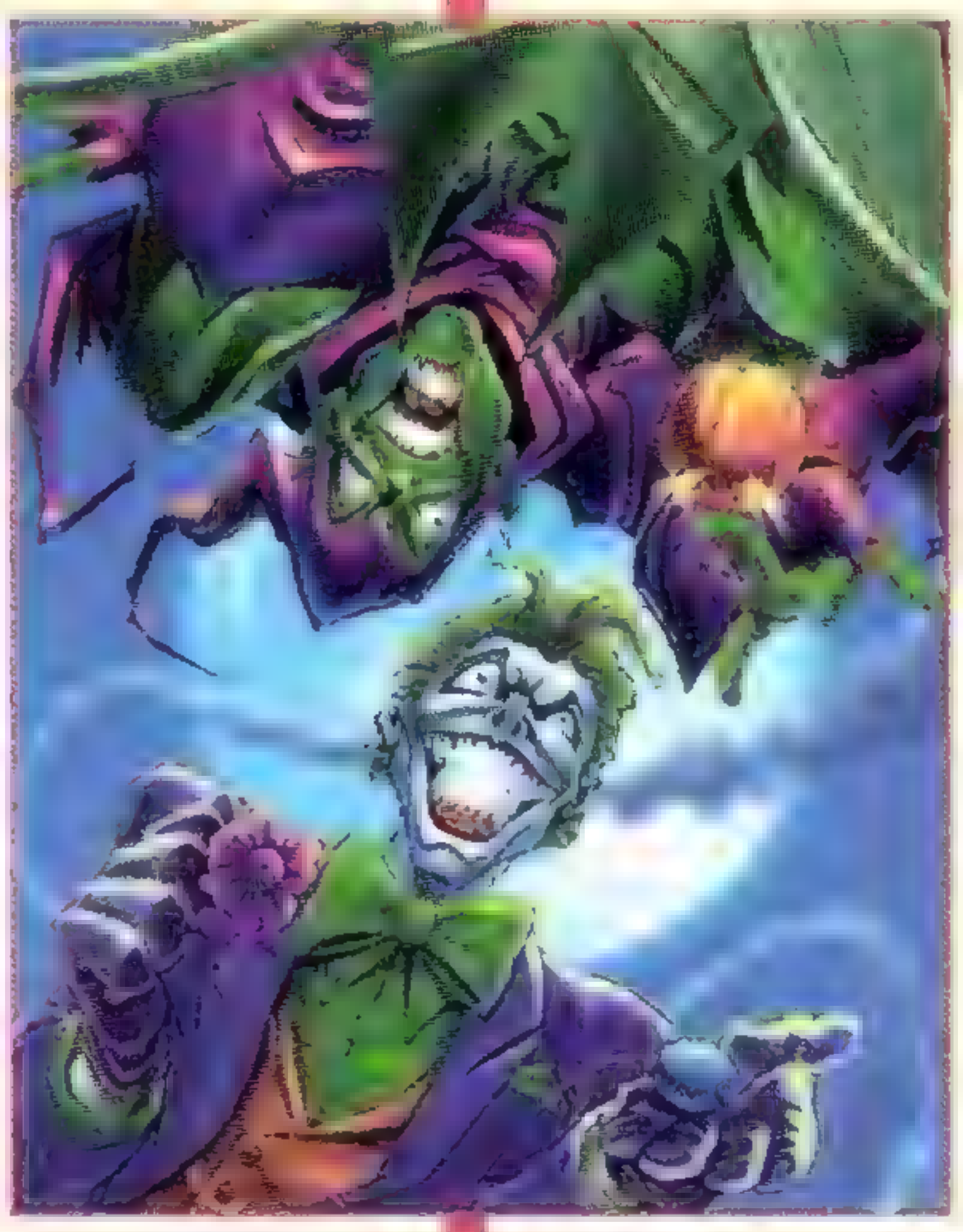
CLASH OF THE TITANS

by Anya Martin

It's the kind of question that makes for knock-down, drag-out turf wars: If the Man of Steel duked it out with Bruce Banner's huge, green, crazed alter-ego, who would win? If the Caped Crusader went toe-to-toe with Captain America? Everyone's favorite webslinger and Superboy? Storm and Wonder Woman? Wolverine and Lobo?



After decades of speculation, fans finally get to find out the answers to these questions and more in *Marvel Versus DC/DC Versus Marvel*: the most spectacular Battle Royale in comics history. The four-issue, Miraweb format miniseries begins this month and concludes in March. Readers can even vote for their pick of the champions in the top five battles listed above. Voting instructions come in the first issue, and ballots can be cast at your neighborhood comics retailer, by mail or via American Online. That's not even mentioning the two trading card sets from Fleer/SkyBox, the first shipping this month, the second at the February '96.

In addition to the aforementioned battles, other noted superheroes also go at it, though the outcomes of these smaller fights are up to the writers. Just to give a taste of the preliminary action, there's Thor vs. Shazam, Sub-Mariner vs. Aquaman, Green Lantern vs. The Silver Surfer, Robin vs. Jubilee and Elektra vs. Catwoman.

"This was a project I simply could not pass up," says writer Peter David. "There is no delicate way to say it—it's a fan boy's wet dream!"

When it came to hiring the right people to fulfill this wet dream, both Marvel Universe Editor-In-Chief Mark Gruenwald and DC Universe Executive Editor Mike Carlin wanted writers who not only carry a heavyweight rep among fans, but also have worked for both

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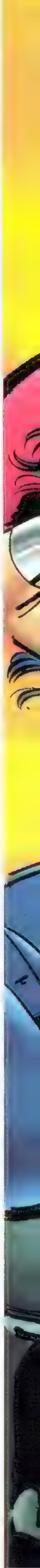

nder Woman vs. Storm! It's the battles of the century; the

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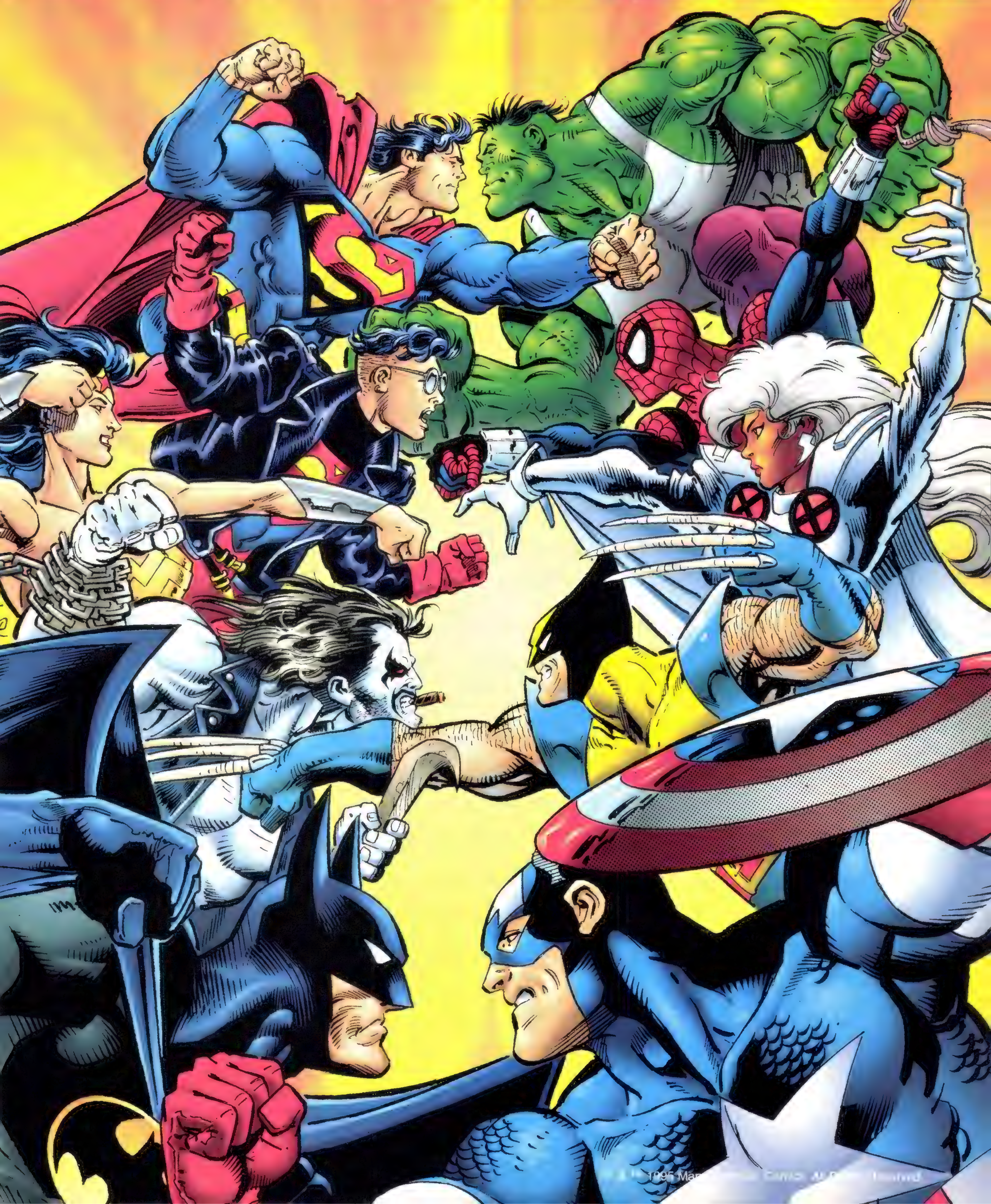

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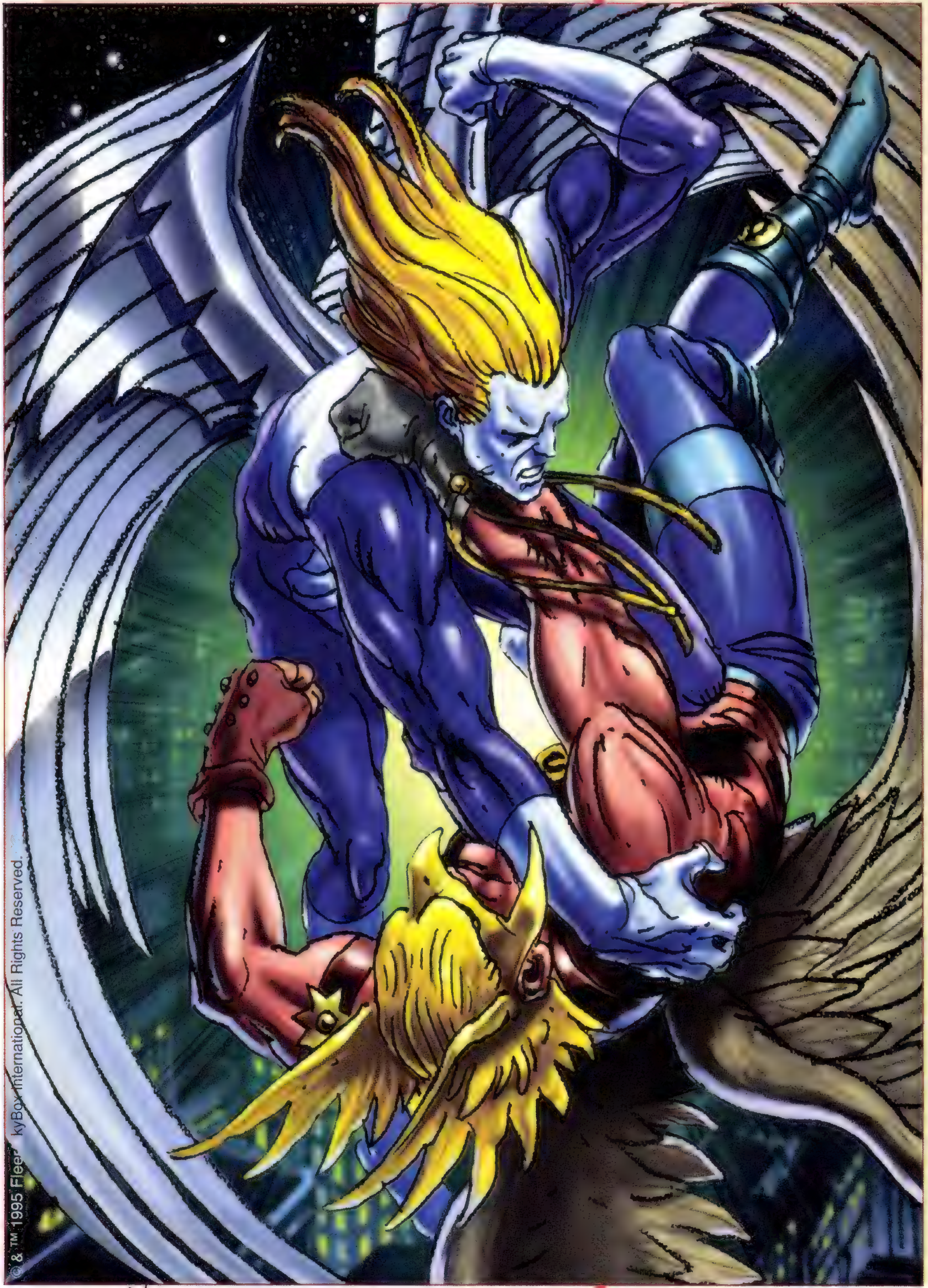
“This was a project I simply could not pass up. There is no delicate way to say it—it’s a fan boy’s wet dream!”—Peter David

companies. David, who’s tackling #2 and #4, is known for *The Incredible Hulk* and *Aquaman* and Ron Marz, handling #1 and #3, built his reputation on *Green Lantern* and *Silver Surfer*.

To make the whole shebang even more tantalizing, pencil-er/inker teams will switch off approximately every eight pages. First, there’s one of DC’s most popular pair-ups: *Superman* penciler Dan Jurgens and inker Josef Rubinstein. Then, from the Marvel side, the one “wild card” of the creative line-up is penciler Claudio Castellini (cover artist of *Fantastic Four Unlimited*), paired with *Excalibur* inker Paul Neary.



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“Dan Jurgens has done projects like this before, plus he’s just had a very successful *Superman* run and is starting a *Spider-Man* run, so he had his feet in both universes,” says Gruenwald. “I was the one who lobbied for Claudio because Claudio had worked over a year on a Silver Surfer graphic novel [shipping in 1996], written by Ron Marz. Anyone who has seen those pages says, ‘Man, this guy’s going to be a stunning major talent.’”

“If the industry is looking for its next hot commodity, its next hot artist, this guy is it,” adds Marz. “He’s like Italy’s Jim Lee; he’s a god over there. He does the most amazing comic artwork that I have ever been involved with.”

The whole thing kicks off when two massively powerful aliens challenge each other in a debate over which universe of super heroes is more powerful. “These two cosmic level beings have not noticed each other for a long time,” Carlin explains. “The last time they noticed each other, the Big Bang occurred. These guys look at each other and say, ‘My action figures are better than your action figures’ and set their toys to duke it out for the fate of one or the other universe.”

“We went with the two celestial beings because we wanted to give the readers something new and different as a reason for this all to take place,” adds Marz. “If it had Galactus and Darkseid, it would feel like, ‘Why didn’t they do this 20 years ago?’”

The next step was to pick the battle pair-ups. According to David, he, Marz, Gruenwald and Carlin chose them on the basis of “a) personality and b) their respec-

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> **"We wound up having Spider-Man go up against Superboy. I mean, it can't be Superman going up against Spider-Man, come on, let's get real, that'll last eight to 10 seconds!" – Peter David**

tive abilities." But sometimes things got a bit more tricky. "Some were a natural, the ones the fans want to see—Wolverine vs. Lobo, Sub-Mariner vs. Aquaman, Superman vs. The Hulk, etc. Spider-Man became a problem because he doesn't have any quick and ready match-up in the DC Universe. The closest is the Creeper, and he's dead, not to mention the fact that you ideally want your most high-profile characters battling each other, and the Creeper is not someone who you go, 'Wow, great, the Creeper!'

"We wound up having Spider-Man go up against Superboy. I mean, it can't be Superman going up against Spider-Man, come on, let's get real, that'll last eight to 10 seconds."

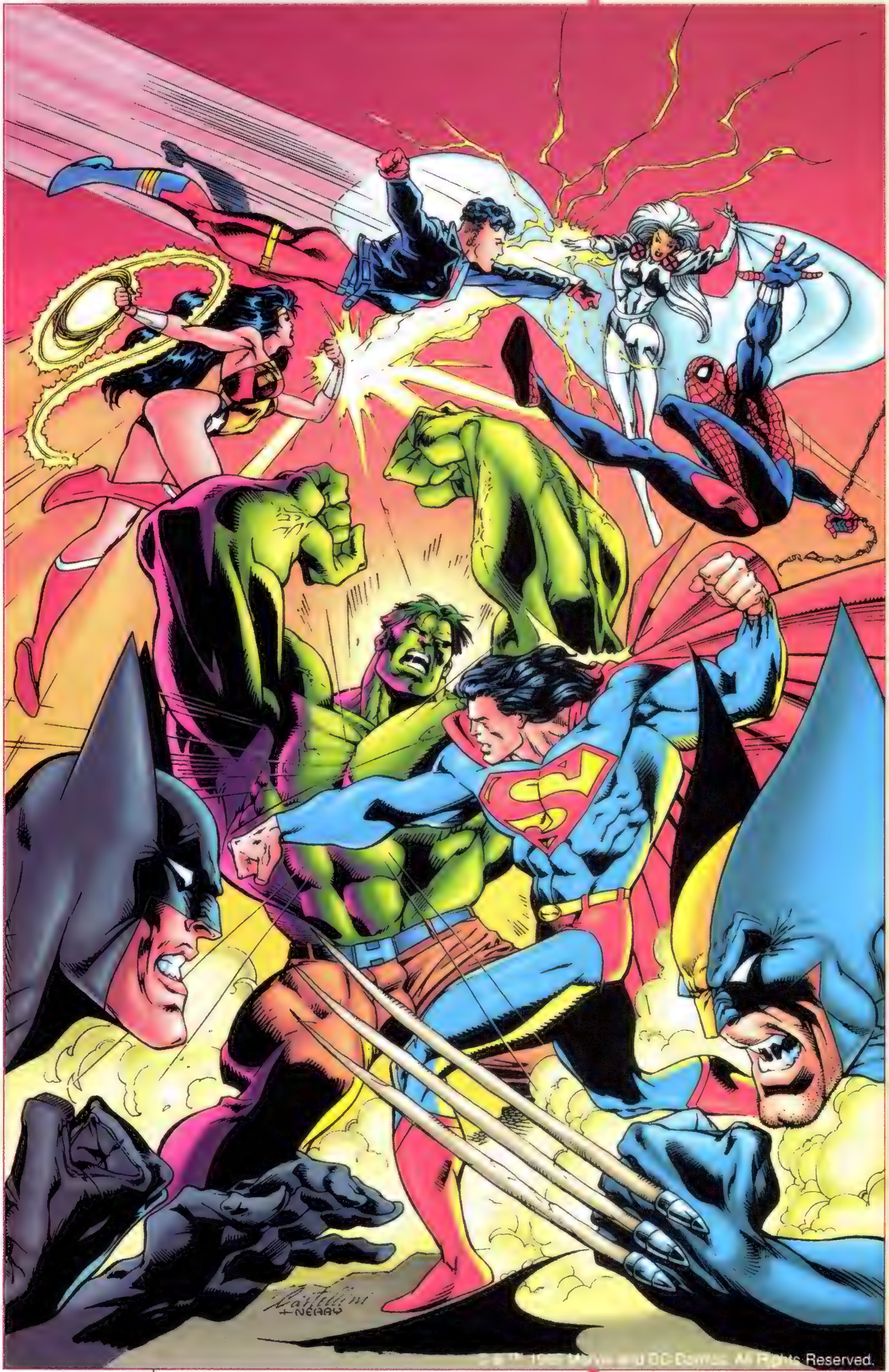
When it came to the main female hero pair-up, David adds finding a good match-up for Wonder Woman was tough, but Storm just seemed a better fit than, say, Jean Grey.

"I guess that's a real match-up of personalities," he notes with a chuckle. "Both Wonder Woman and Storm come across as very noble characters. Frankly, the two of the them could just stand there and try to figure out who's more noble; that alone could be an interesting battle. 'I'm more noble.' 'No, I am.' 'I'll throw the fight.' 'No, I will first.'"

Of course, the first challenge is to get the characters together in the first place. The celestials accomplish this by arranging for both universes suddenly to appear on top of each other, something that would seem like it would be kind of...er...disconcerting for the inhabitants. For example, when Spider-Man finds himself in Gotham City and the Joker pops up. "There's a great deal of confusion bordering on panic," says Marz.

While DC and Marvel heroes remain at the center of the action, each company's villains cause their own mischief. "It's really a hero-driven story, having the heroes from either universe taking one another on, but the villains add color to the overall tapestry," says Marz. "Like having Superman meet the Juggernaut, which happens in the first eight pages of issue #1."

While Elektra and Catwoman sure sounds like



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> **"Both Wonder Woman and Storm come across as very noble characters. Frankly, the two of the them could just stand there and try to figure out who's more noble."—Peter David**

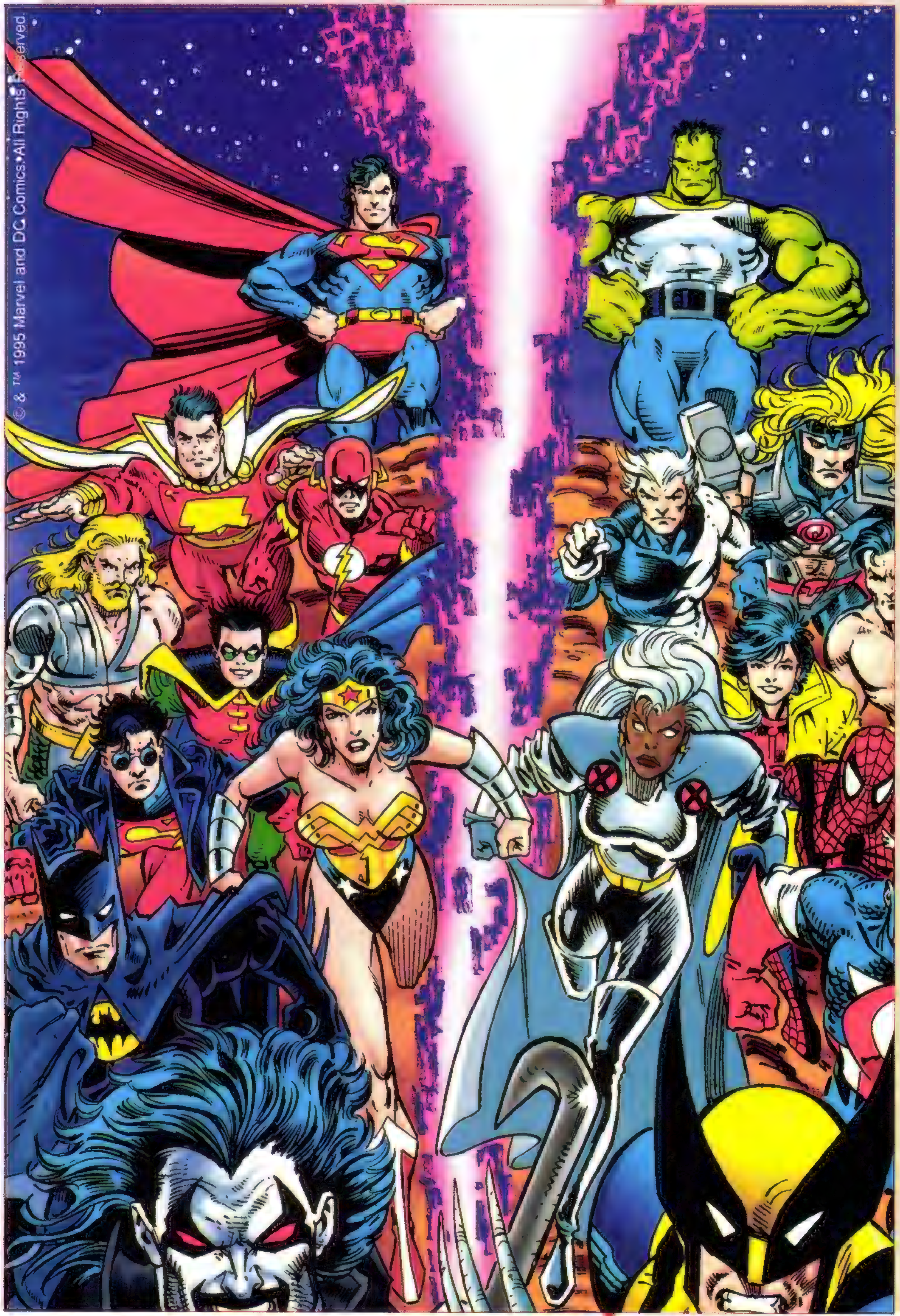
the hottest catfight in comics history, some other wackier villain encounters include sewer residents Killer Croc and the Abomination ganging up against Wolverine and Nightwing and Marvel's Mole Man drilling himself up into the Bat Cave. Then there's Carlin's favorite bad guy team-up: DC's Scarecrow with Marvel's Scarecrow.

But not all of the more subtle touches involve villains. For example, in issue #1, Clark Kent and Peter Parker end up as a reporter/photographer team working for *The Daily Planet*. Marz says he especially enjoyed "Something that I came up with—the Fantastic Four headquarters plopped down next to the *Daily Planet* building. It was all like going into a candy store and having carte blanche—you get to pick whatever you want."

"First off, you make it a big book," David adds. "You have to be aware that not everybody is going to have an equal amount of time. In the initial discussion between myself, Ron, Mike and Mark, we determined whom the main battles were going to be between. Then we just focused down to, 'Okay, who else can we squeeze in for quick appearances that the fans will get a kick out of.'"

Of all the match-ups, David says the conflict he's most intrigued by is the one involving the character who established David as a big-name comics writer. "If this had been 10 years ago," he speculates, "I'd say Superman in a heartbeat because Superman could move a planet, for God's sake. But Superman's powers are different now and the Hulk's powers are different, so it's not necessarily so clear cut."

These factors are precisely the sort all the editors and writers expressed hope that fans will weigh before casting votes. "I hope people will sit down and think of Superman and all of his powers and think of the Hulk and all of his powers, then think of them coming together and really determine who they believe in their heart of hearts would win," says Gruenwald. "I hope it doesn't just come down to a popularity contest or sentiments pro or against Marvel for being so big. I hope that people will really get into analyzing the bouts and figuring out who would really win."



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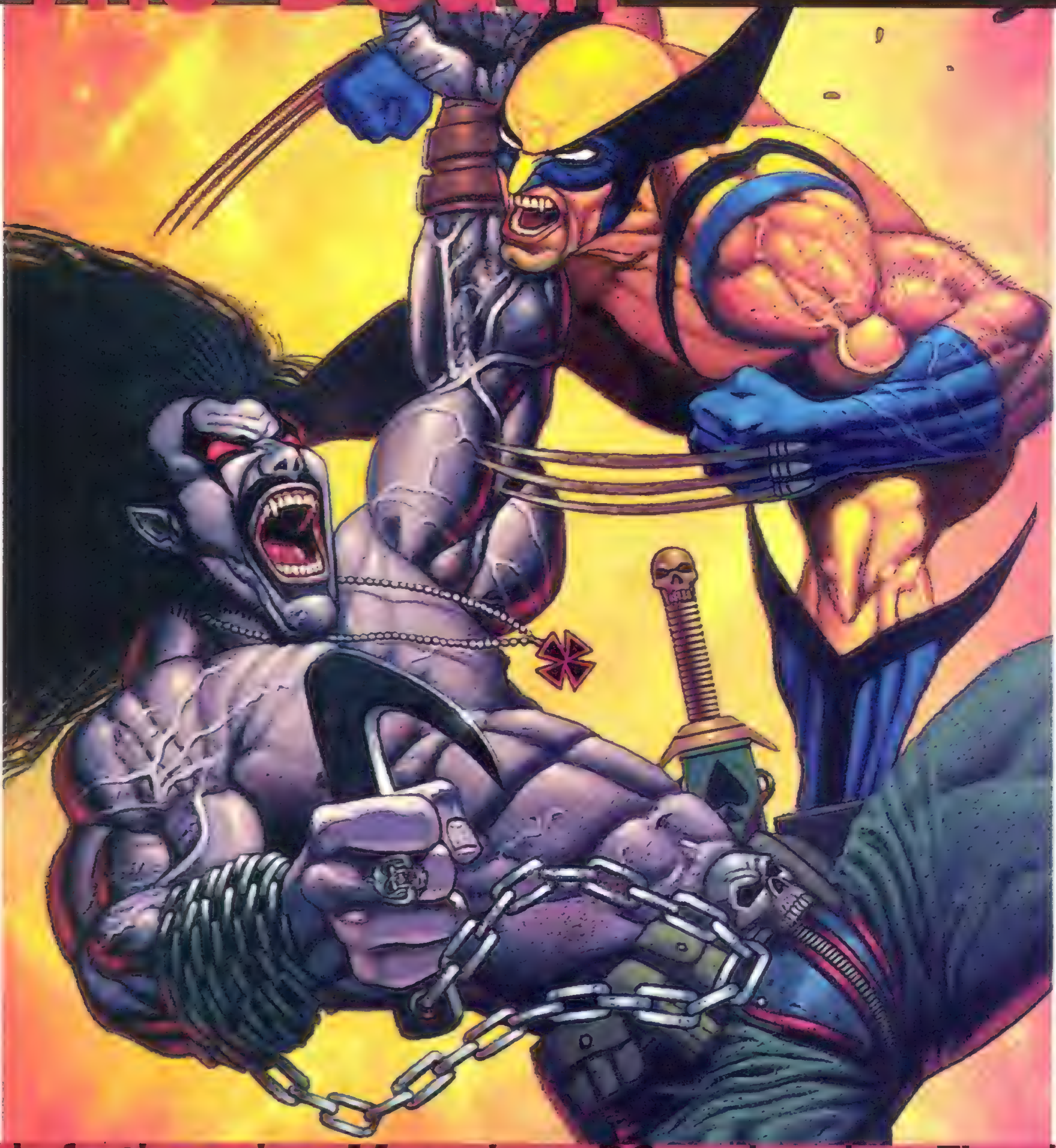
To The Death

by steve fritz



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With their forthcoming *Marvel vs. DC* card series, Fleer/Skybox send some of comics' greatest superpowers to their doom

How many times have you heard of a card set that can actually dictate the end of a major miniseries? Not too many. In fact, it's never been attempted—until now. As you know probably all too well by now, each pack of the forthcoming *Marvel vs. DC* set from Fleer/SkyBox will include a ballot where you can decide if Superman gets the clearance to kill the Hulk, whether Batman or Captain America is the last soldier left standing, Storm blasts Wonder Woman back to her island or Spider-Man gets to slap some sense into Superboy. Heck, you even get to choose whether Lobo or Wolverine gets to light up a particularly disgusting victory stogie after they face each other.

Working on a project where the results of some of the greatest battles in comics history are left up to the fans certainly sounds like fun—and Fleer's Director on the project, Dan Buckley, doesn't deny he had a good time doing it. But he also admits that it was somewhat of a logistical nightmare.

"It was a little mind boggling," admits Buckley. "The editors at Marvel and DC only had to deal with four people on the creative side of things [*Peter David and Ron Marz for writing, Dan Jurgens and Claudio Castellini for art*]. We only had Ron Marz writing the card text, but we had to coordinate with over 50 different artists. Getting everything done—on time and while trying to tell everyone to keep a lid on it—was nearly impossible."

In fact, Buckley admits he started recruiting artists as far back as last June, giving out the last pieces of work during this year's San Diego Comic Con. By trading card standards, that's a really tight window to squeeze a deadline through. As far as keeping it quiet was concerned, that didn't happen.

"How can you possibly keep something like that a secret?," asks Nelson,who was working on the latest *Marvel Masterpiece* set when he heard about the *Marvel vs. DC* set. "It had so many artists working on the project, it had to leak out. Also, in order to get the job like this done, you have to get a bunch of names and you have to get them way ahead of time. Then all that has to happen is one of them walks into your studio and sees your piece for the set being done.

"It's really a hero-driven story, having the heroes from either universe taking one another on—but the villains add color to the overall tapestry."—Ron Marz

They're going to ask you about things like, 'What's that painting with Green Lantern and Silver Surfer on it?' You better believe they're going to talk about it afterwards, whether you tell them to be quiet or not."

Naturally, even though Nelson was doing more than his share of cards at the moment, he had to have a piece of this action as well. "Oh yeah, oh yeah!" he exclaims. "I thought the Superman/Spider-Man one they did back when was fantastic. I even have Batman vs. The Hulk...in Portuguese no less. Even thought I couldn't read it, I thought that the art was so great and Batman against Hulk was such a pisser, I had to have it. So when I found out Fleer was doing a card set like that, I told them I had to do it."

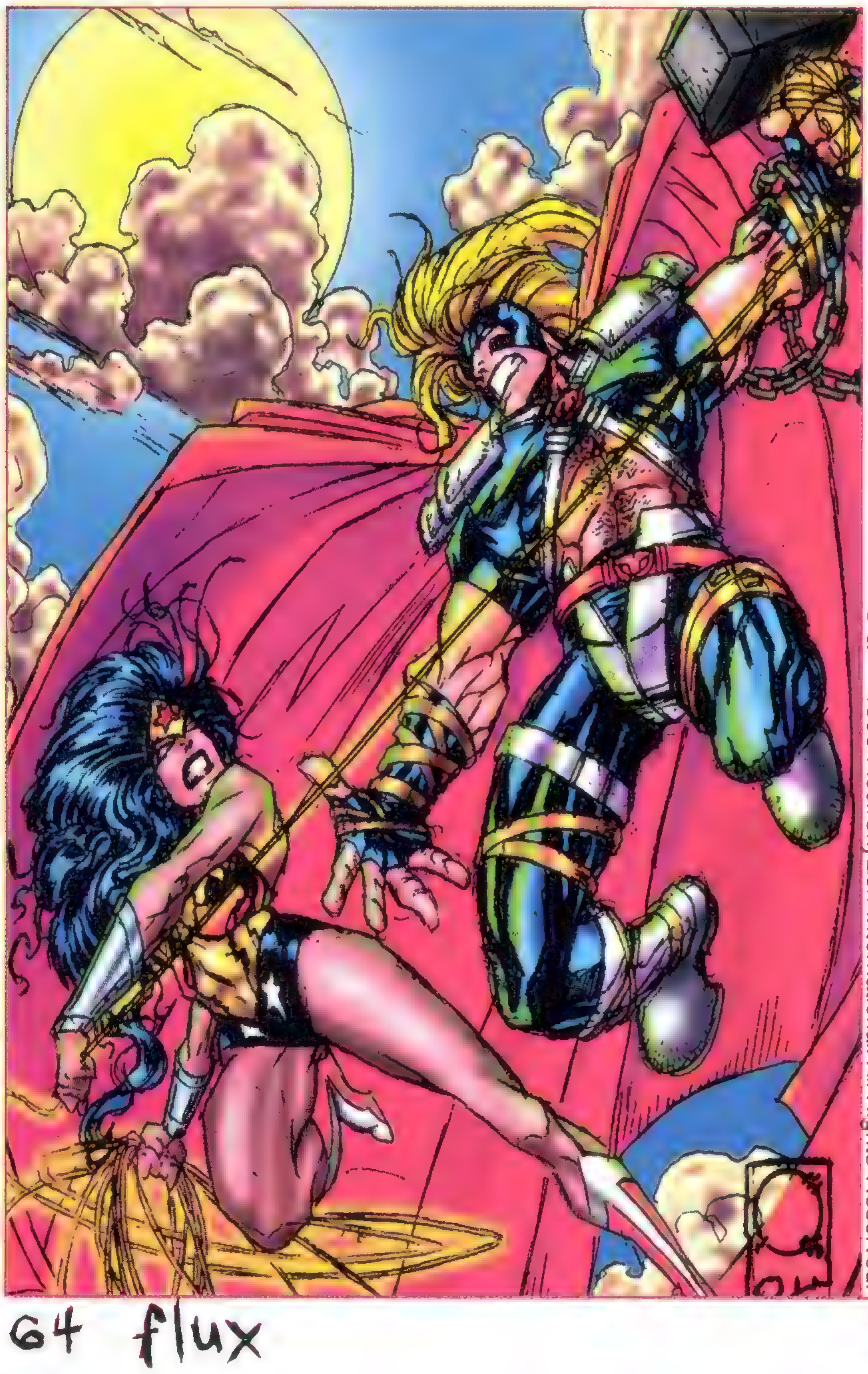
So Nelson convinced Buckley that he should be allowed to do one card, the aforementioned Green Lantern vs. Silver Surfer. He's a happy man. He admits it wasn't his first choice, but that seems to be the case with other artists as well.

"Did you see the Batman vs. Captain America?" asks Andy Kubert when he was asked the same question. "That one would have been a blast. Those are two of my favorite characters and they would have been a lot of fun to do."

Kubert isn't complaining. He has no reason to. In fact, he states that Marvel and DC wanted him to be one of the two artists on the actual comic book.

"I had to turn it down," said Kubert. "I didn't have the time to do it. It's so hectic with the *X-Men* book I'm doing, I just didn't have the time. I'd have had to forego doing *X-Men* in order to get this done."

So Kubert did five cards instead: Captain America, Elektra, Hulk, Thor and Magneto. He admits he had to use different disciplines in doing these cards compared to his comic book work.



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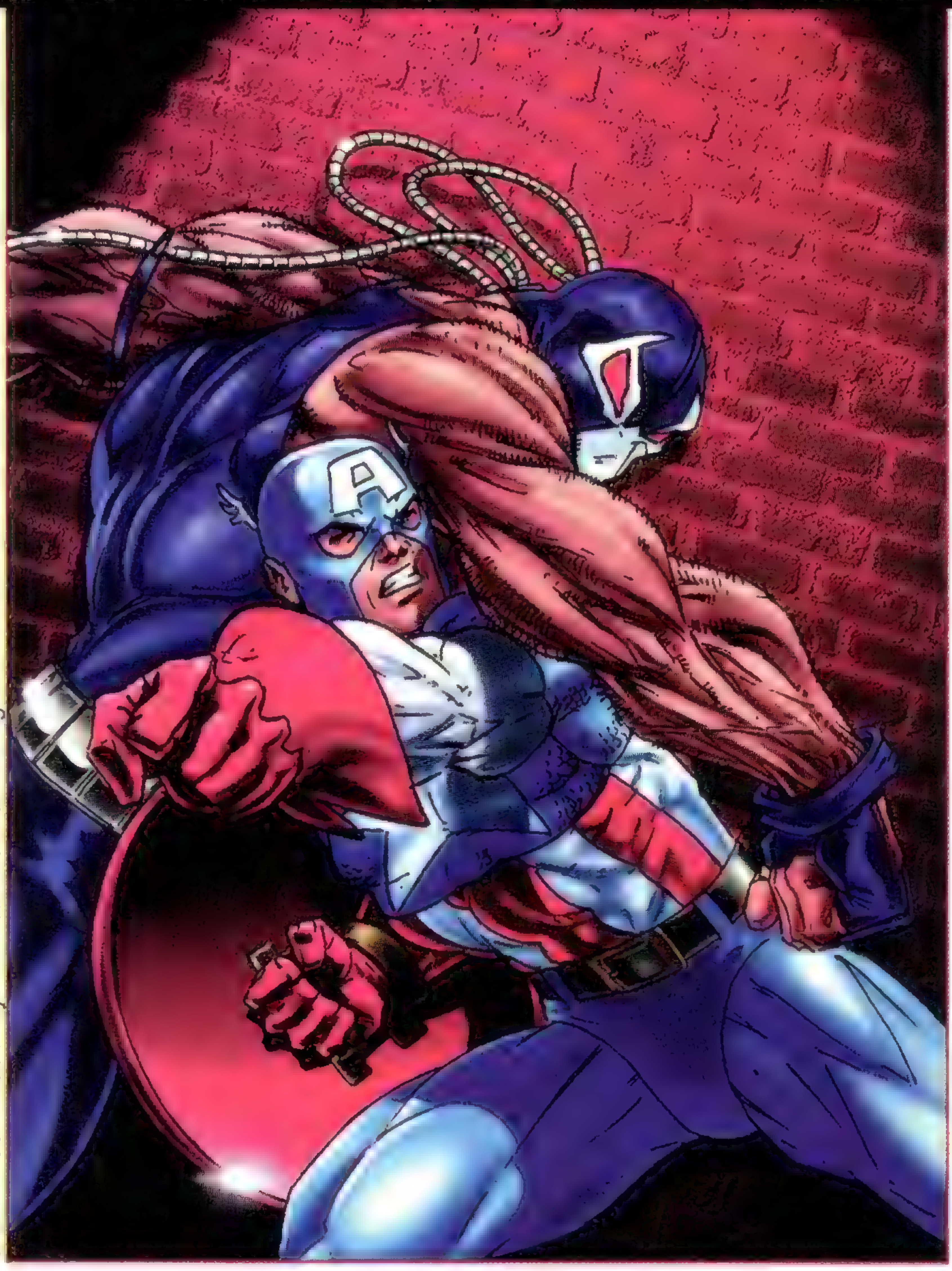

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"Basically, I treated every card like it was a cover," said Kubert. "Doing a comic is totally different because you have the ability to go from one scene to the next, and with the ability of being able to tell a story from page to page. With a card, you only got that one shot, so I did them like they told the entire story. I went for the biggest impact you can."

Of course, to keep things really hopping, Buckley also had to throw in the voting ballots with every pack of cards. Fleer will also be handling the results and telling the writers what the fans decided. Buckley doesn't relish the idea of telling either Peter David (who writes *The Hulk*) or Dan Jurgens (*Superman*) that the fans voted their character is the one who got creamed.

"Actually, that'll be the fun part," says Buckley. "We got the vote as it takes out the collusion part of it. We got to do the voting because it was decided we would get a lot more impressions out, mainly because people can't help getting multiple impressions of cards and more than one ballot when they buy packs. The voting mechanism was decided as far back as June. We had talked about phone cards before we finally decided on having votes in the card packs. The reason for that was it was hard enough for both Marvel and DC to get it together from a publishing perspective. It was even harder to make it be both a comic and a card event. So the end result was that we decided we should come up with something so readers could vote, but that wouldn't be so expensive. Also, we decided on the cards because that way people wouldn't have to mess up their comics."

"The contest should be a lot of fun and I think it's kind of neat. Also, if people don't want to buy a pack of cards to vote, there will be ballots at their store. You can also vote through the Internet."

Whatever the final results will be, Buckley's now hard at work on more DC and Marvel card sets for Fleer. Nine will get you ten they'll all be a hell of a lot easier in comparison.

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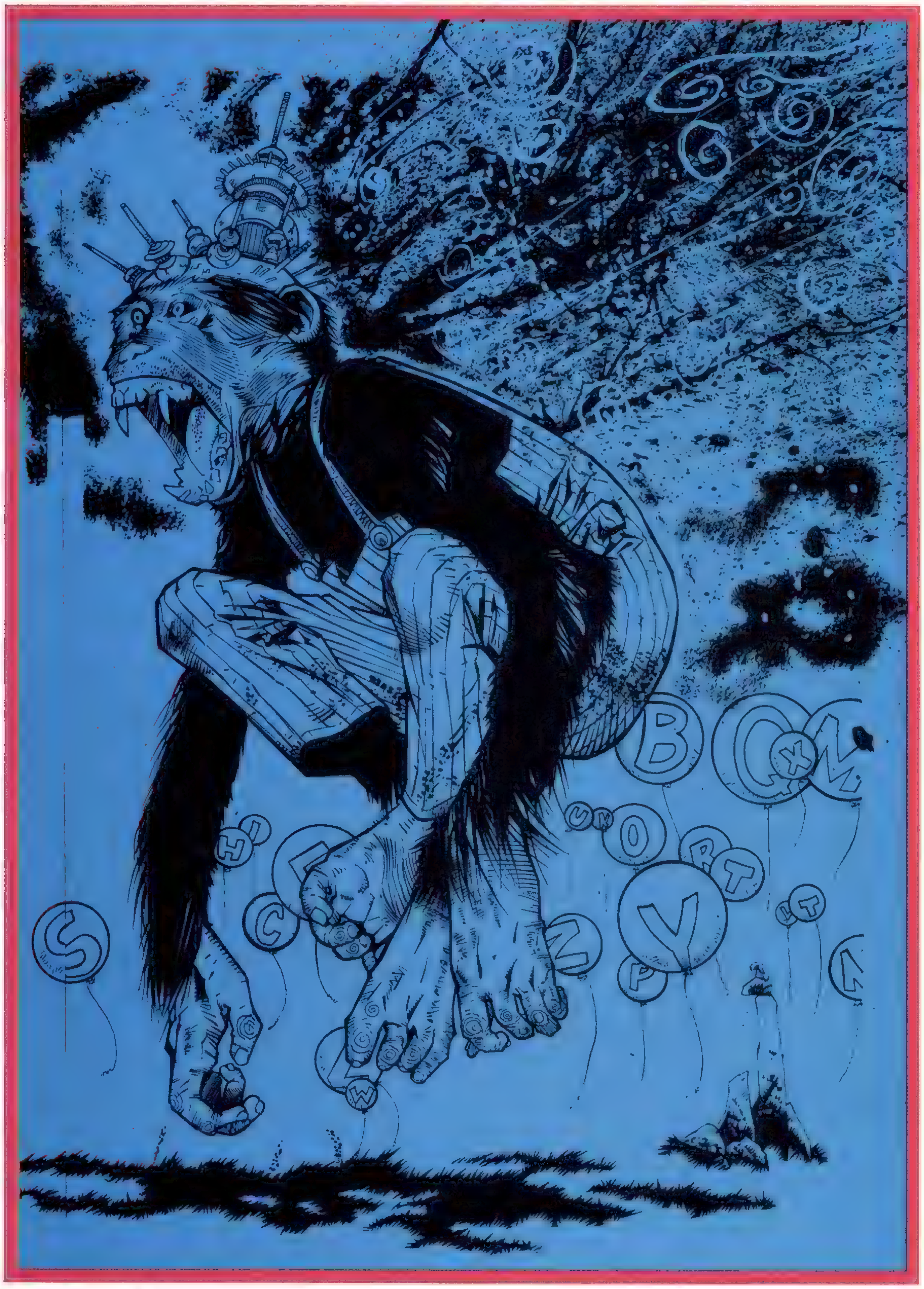
TO THE MAXX

GEN 13 AND THE MAXX TAKE THINGS TO A NEW EXTREME WITH IMAGE'S HOTLY ANTICIPATED CROSSOVER

BY ROBERT J. SODARO



When asked what caused the teaming-up of the characters from two titles as diverse as *Gen 13* and *The Maxx*, Scott Dunbier, editor of the new 32-page Image one-shot, replied, "We're interested in doing things we enjoy, and we just thought it would be a lot of fun." He went on to indicate that virtually everyone in the Wildstorm studio was a fan of *The Maxx* and creator Sam Keith. "*The Maxx* is such an off-the wall book," says Dunbier. "Sam's changed so much from the work he was doing in *Marvel Comics Presents*. His work looks almost Dr. Seuss to me, and I mean that in a highly complementary way."

Still, you'd be hard-pressed to find two books that are more dissimilar in their underlying premise. *The Maxx* is a highly evocative, esoteric mood piece about a self-aware superhero which takes place primarily inside the psyche of Julie Winters, the heroine of the piece. According to scripter Bill Messner-Loebs, the Maxx is, "...much more interested in getting to his next therapy session than he is in actually fighting people." On the other hand, Jim Lee's *Gen 13* is a slam-bang, action piece about a bunch of teens with extraordinary powers who tend to punch people out and blow things up.

Dissimilar? Sure, but in the capable hands of writer Messner-Loebs, it's sure to work. According to Lobes, who has scripted Keith's *Maxx* since it began, Lee came up with the idea, and approached Keith with the concept. Since *The Maxx* was already being published by Lee's Wildstorm Studios division of Image, much of the groundwork was already in place. Both Lee and Keith had their respective hands in plotting the story, but, according to Messner-Lobes, he was pretty much given free reign. "At the beginning of these things, everyone always says, 'Yeah, we should just do

MISSING SINCE 1967
THE MAXX
T. TH

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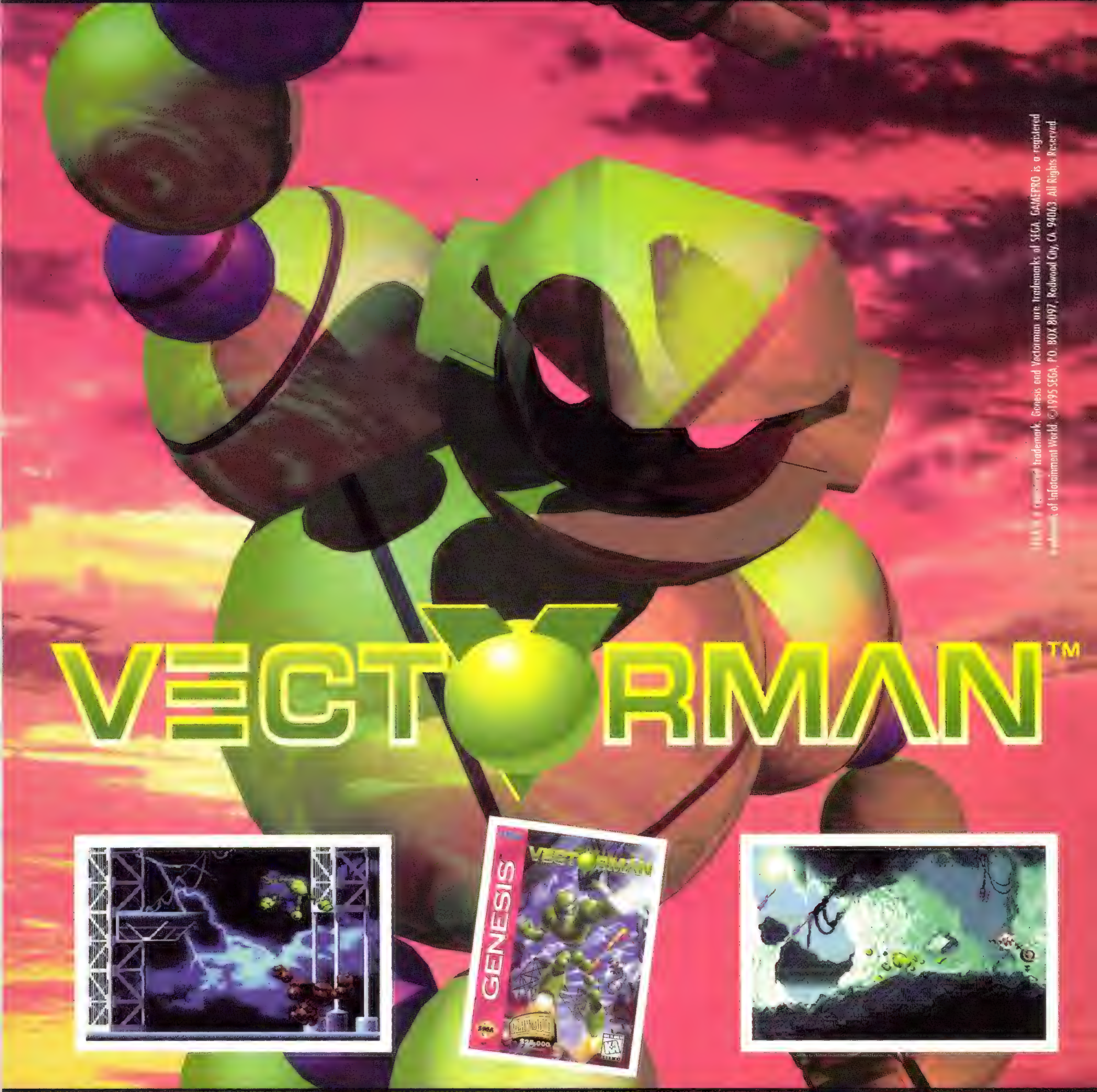

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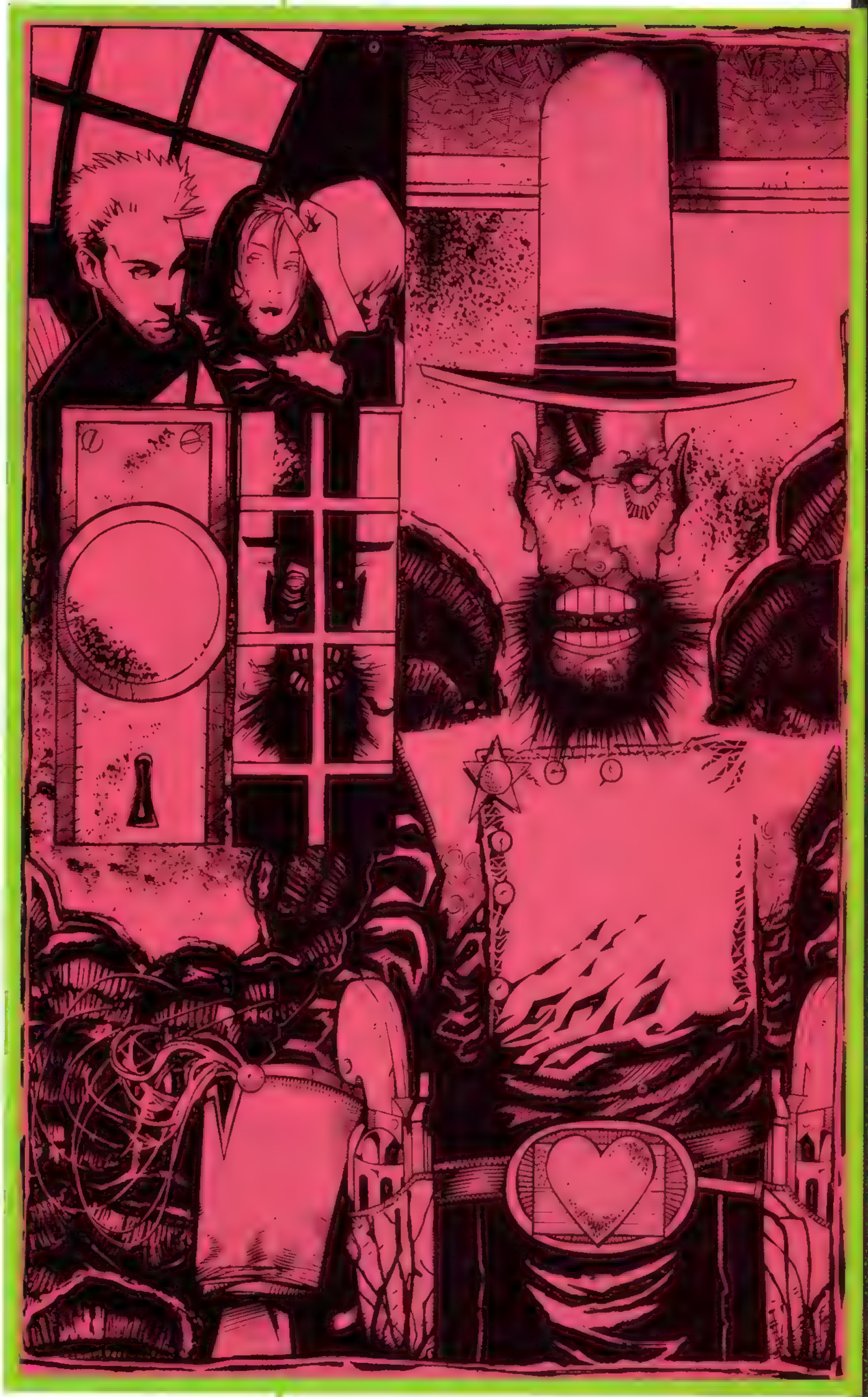


whatever we want.' But when you see people actually writing these characters that you've created, you realize that there are things that you really don't want them to do."

But while Messner-Lobes was able to work freely, there was some concern about the framework of the storyline itself. "Sam needed to be sure that we weren't using any of Julie's Outback (i.e. someone's subconscious) in the new person's Outback, and Jim wanted to make sure that we weren't tying up the subconscious of one of his major characters in case he wanted to use it at some point." Messner-Loebs indicated that while those concerns were real, they were relatively minor, and he was able to strike an accord that pleased everyone involved.

Without wanting to reveal too much of what was going on, Messner-Lobes talked briefly about the plot. It seems that Mr. Gone, the major villain of *The Maxx*, is kidnapping children for some nefarious end, when he happens to put the snatch on Fairchild's sister's kids—which, naturally, brings in Gen 13. After he grabs the kids, Mr. Gone is placing them into an outback. Upon learning of the location of the children, Gen 13 arrive in this outback, only to discover that the Maxx—who usually hangs out in the outback of Julie Winters—is also there. ("This is our one 'gimmie' in order to get everyone together," Messner-Loebs stated.)

Penciler Tom Corker is not only very excited to be working on the project, but is also somewhat mystified by the story. "I'm kind of lost on a lot of the story," says Corker. "Every day I have new speculation on what the ending is, but it's kind of hard to figure out exactly what's going on without the rest of the script." Corker came to Dunbier's attention at the 1995 San Diego Comic Con, where he was showing off some pages for an upcoming *Young Captain Adventure* strip he had penciled for Penthouse Comix. "I was looking for an artist for this book, and I was just blown away by his work," recalls Dunbier.

From Dunbier, Corker's work was shown to Scott Campbell and Lee, and the next thing Corker knew, he was set up with space in the Wildstorm studios and working on the book. Prior to landing the Penthouse gig, Corker said that he had taken a year off to "Learn how to draw." Claiming that all his previous work was horrid, the only work he would actually admit to was *Wolverine* #76.

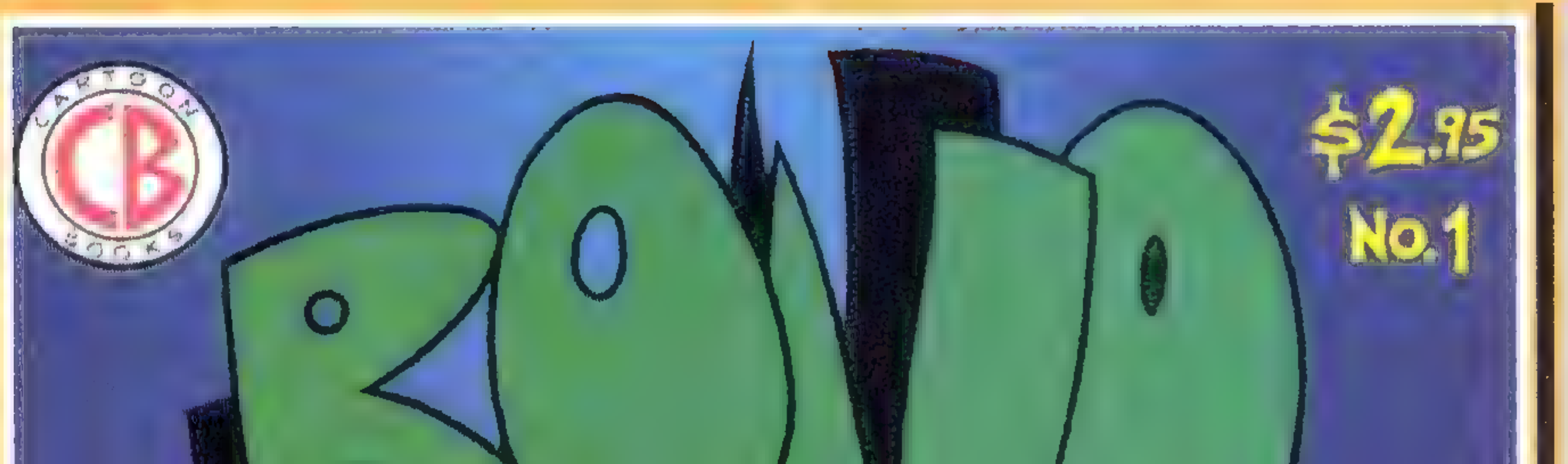
Assisting Corker on inks is Troy Hubbs, who is currently inking Travis Charest on *WildC.A.T.s*. "When I saw Tom's work, I immediately thought of Troy," says Dunbier. "He has such a clean crisp line quality. They're working out really, really well together."

Dunbier indicated that, even though the book hasn't been solicited this way (and won't be), there is an outside possibility the comic's cover would be penciled by Corker and inked by Keith, if Keith was able to fit the work into his schedule. "I didn't solicit it that way because of Keith's commitments," says Dunbier. "But Sam has told me that he really wants to do it."

BREAKING BONE

CREATOR JEFF SMITH REVEALS THE SECRETS BEHIND BONE'S NEWFOUND IMAGE AND DECADE-LONG RISE TO POWER

by Robert J. Sodaro



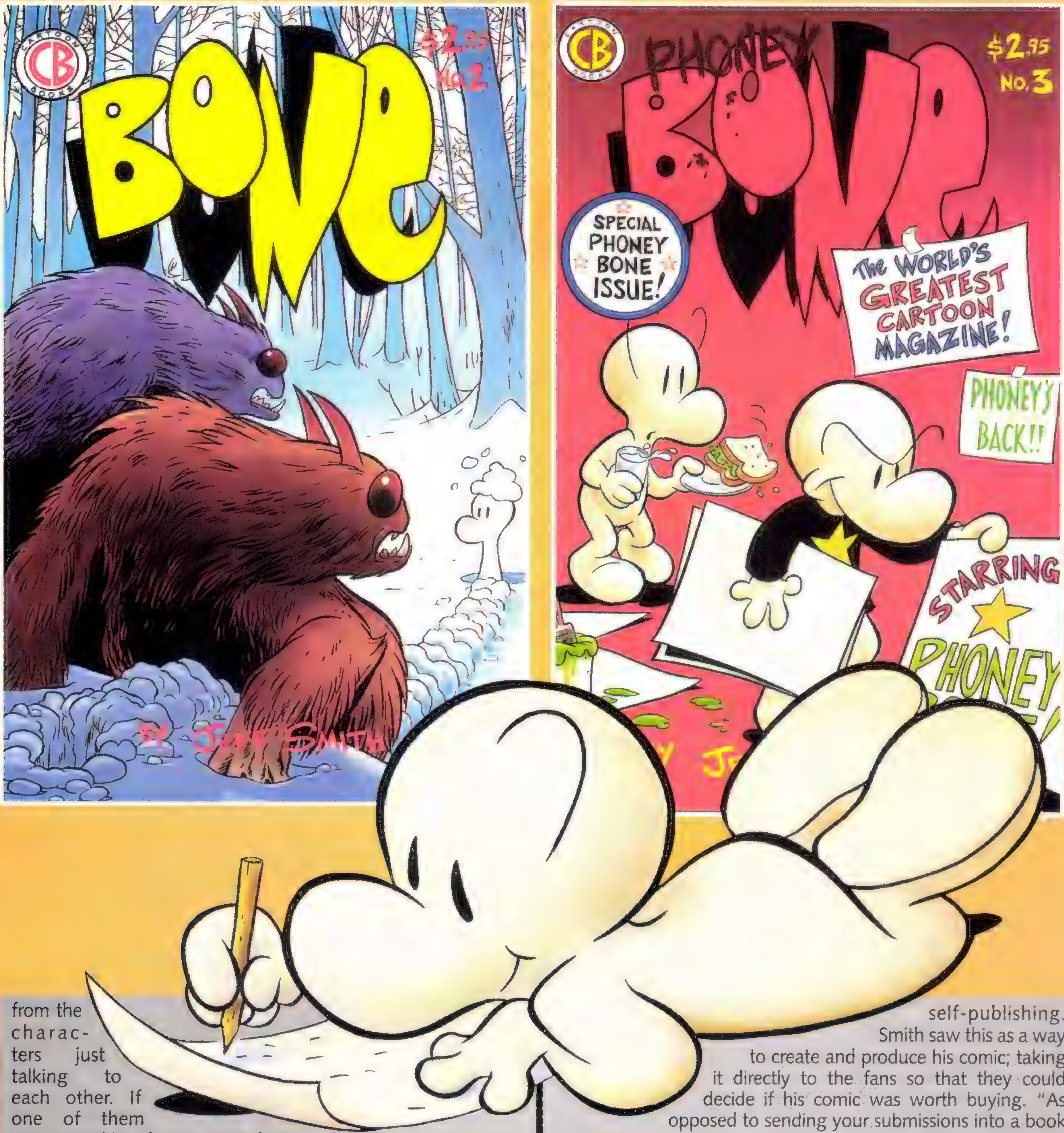
The very thought of Image Comics brings to mind colorful characters with astounding powers; strong, brutish men, striking women; heroes and villains with big guns and explosive action that jumps off the page and lands in your lap. What is least likely to come to mind, though, are cuddly, introspective characters oddly reminiscent of Walt Kelly's *Pogo* wandering around in a fantasy motif…until now. This past October, Bone—an black-and-white underground favorite previously self-published by creator Jeff Smith—made its debut under the Image banner.

Described by many as witty, charming and irresistible, *Bone* is one of the most oddly unique comics to come from the underworld of self-publishing in quite some time. Writer/artist Smith refers to it as Bugs Bunny meets *Lord Of The Rings*. "It's a fast-paced, bombastic comedy layered over a *Wizard Of Oz* fantasy story," says Smith.

To Smith's credit, *Bone* has been winning not only high critical praise since it first hit the stands a few years back, but has been gaining fan approval with each successive issue. The move to Image (with issue #21), is sure to garner an even greater mass-market appeal.

For the uninitiated, *Bone* is the story of three Bone cousins (Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone), who, after being run out of Boneville (due to the ever larcenous ways of Phoney), become lost and separated in a vast, uncharted desert. Eventually they reunite, and find their way into a deep, enchanted forest filled with wonderful and terrifying creatures. This intriguing valley is populated with humans, talking dragons, oversized rats that like quiche, friendly possums and honeybees the size of pack mules. The Bones themselves are smallish, cartoon-like creatures that are always at the center of things, often precipitating the events that swirl around them.

Smith originally conceived *Bone* as a comic strip (and in fact, produced it as a daily for four years while he was attending college at Ohio State), eventually pitching it to various syndicates with no success. "A comic strip demands a joke a day, and I don't do that kind of humor," says Smith. "Here's the set-up, drum roll, punch line, ba-dum-bum. My humor comes



from the characters just talking to each other. If one of them says something funny, great, but I can't always cram that into four panels." Smith, ever concerned with the overall story, would often end strips with cliff-hangers or set-ups for the following day. This approach unfortunately proved to be unmarketable when he was shopping it around to the syndicates.

The other major obstacle to getting *Bone* into syndication was that, at that time (the early Eighties), creators were required to sign away virtually all rights to their creations. "The kind of work-for-hire agreements they have at Marvel look completely liberal [by comparison]. These were things where you signed away ownership of everything. The Syndicate could even fire you, hire someone else to draw the comic strip and still sign your name to it." As one would expect, a grass-roots artist like Smith found that unacceptable, and shelved *Bone* for a few years while he pursued other interests.

He set up his own studio, and did animation until a friend introduced him to the world of comic books and the concept of self-publishing.

Smith saw this as a way to create and produce his comic; taking it directly to the fans so that they could decide if his comic was worth buying. "As opposed to sending your submissions into a book company or syndicate and sitting by the mailbox waiting for someone else to *allow* your work to be judged," says Smith. Armed with only his own talents and his wonderful characters, Smith entered into the do-it-yourself field of self-publishing.

The going wasn't easy, and it took quite a while, but a couple of years into the book, Smith realized that he was able to make a living working with *Bone*. "About two years into it, I was doing it full-time, and I convinced my wife to quit her job and come be my partner full time." With his move to Image a done deal, Smith jokes that he has farmed out the work on *Bone* to nameless ghosts, so that he can spend his leisure time counting his money (while lounging around his villa in the South of France), and approve licenses for electric toothbrush holders shaped like the Bone characters.

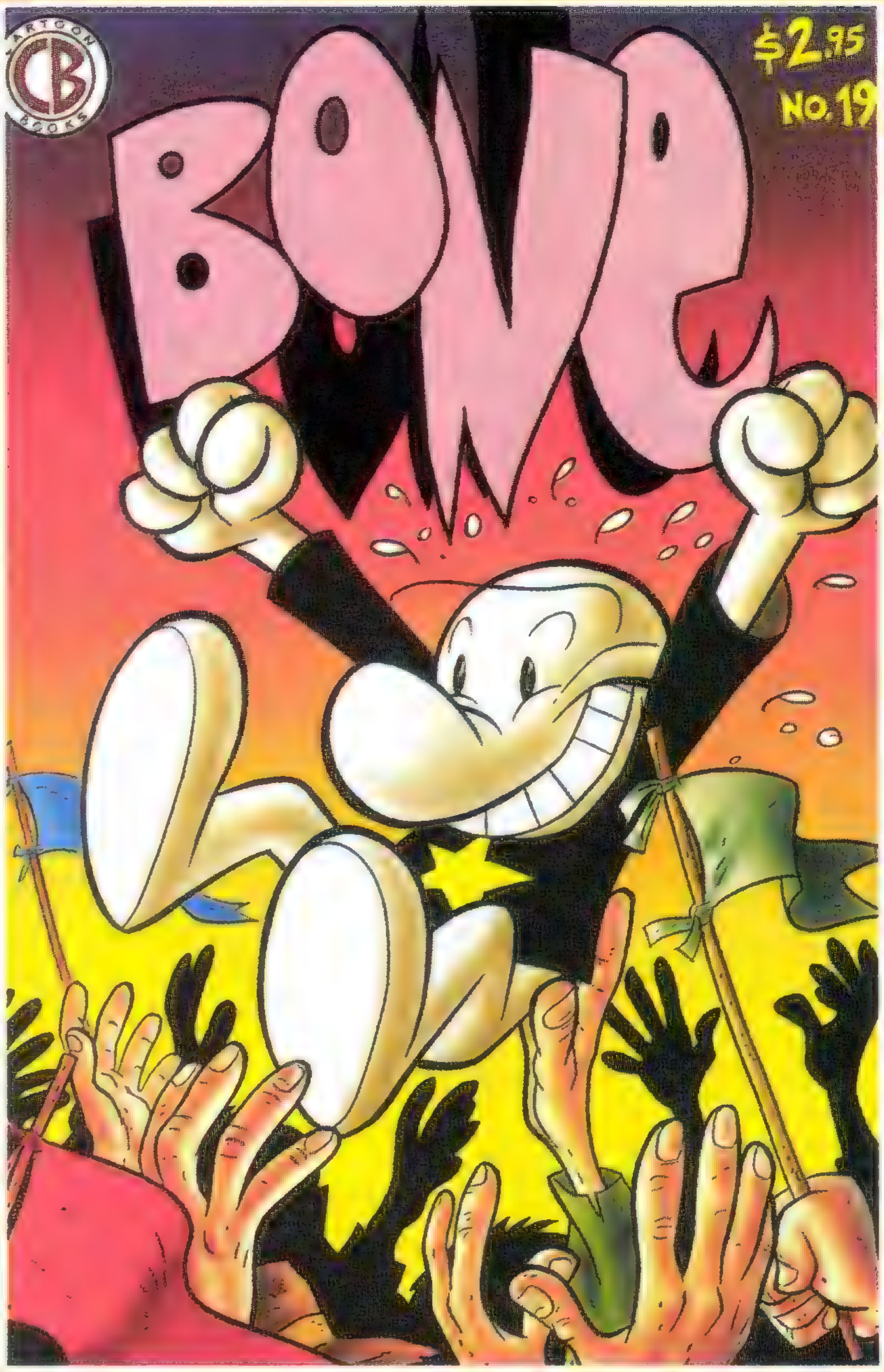
On a more serious note, he admits that his move to Image was the only thing that saved him. He feels that his signing on with Image is not so much of a selling-out as it is helping him preserve his artistic vision and integrity. "By going to Image, I didn't have to sell out the characters…I still own them." Disney (which published a *Bone* story in their *Disney Adventures Digest*), was interested in publishing the comic, but—like the Syndicates before them—wanted to own the characters outright. "Things got pretty frightening for me back in March (of '95). The only way I could not sell out was to go with Image."

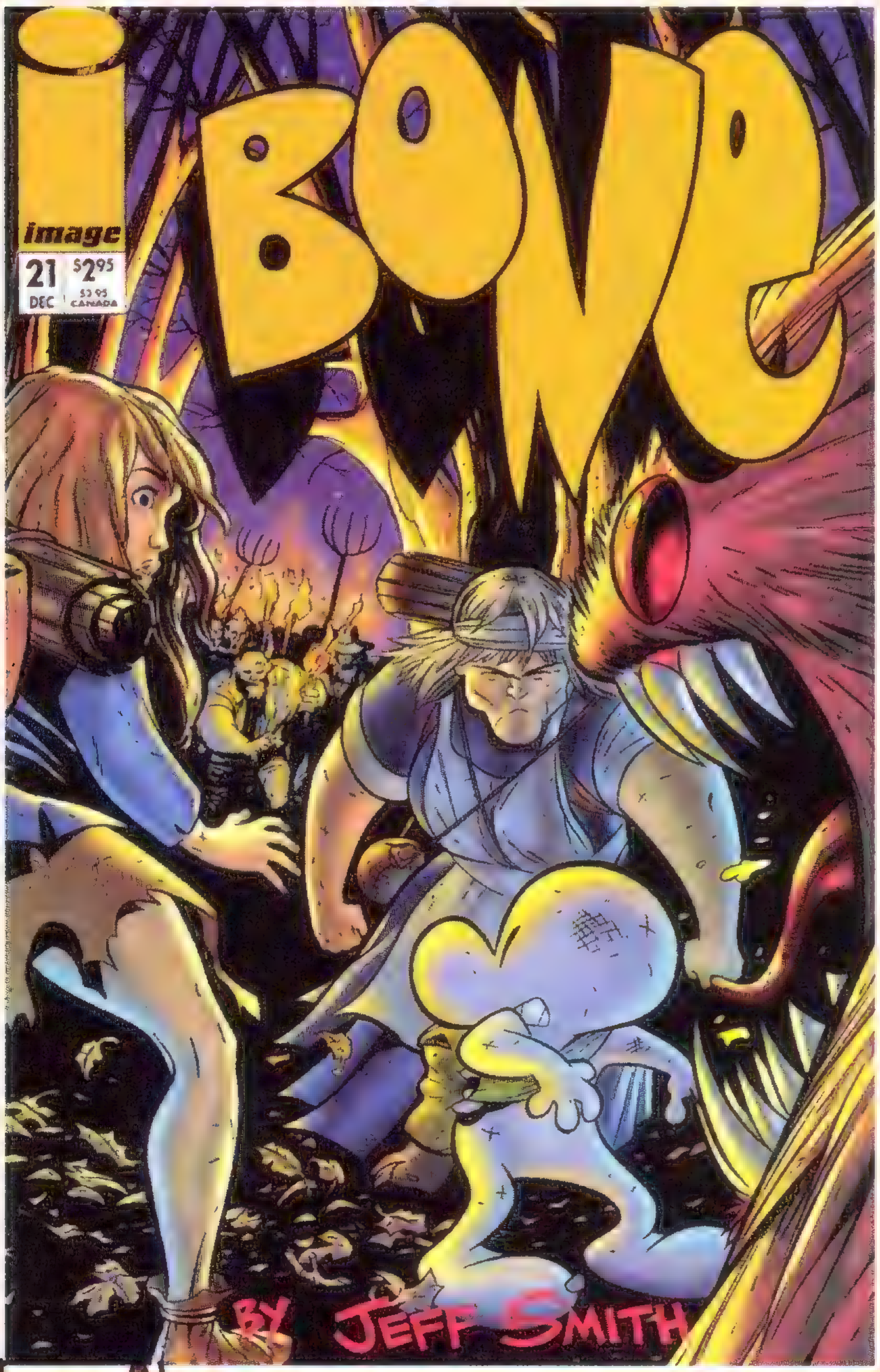
Smith went on to say that the primary difference between Image and a company like Dark Horse—which *is* creator-friendly—is that Mike Richardson as the owner and publisher of Dark Horse gets to make the decisions about publishing schedules and such. Image, on the other hand, is more of a coalition run by the creators. Thus, while Image is technically publishing the book, Smith is, in reality, actually publishing it himself: Image merely performs "publishing services" for him.

"I still have to publish it myself," says Smith. "I still deal with the printer, I still set the schedules." And he still gets to print in black and white.

With the move to Image, Cartoon Books (Smith's company, which published the first 20 issues), will no longer sell current, back issues, or subscriptions to the series. Existing subscriptions, however, will be honored to their conclusion. Image will begin to reprint the series from issue #1 (in black and white), and will, from now on, be the only place these old issues will be available. Cartoon Books will continue to publish the square-bound, collected volumes (which contain six stories and is currently up to #3). According to Smith, all the first printings of early *Bone* issues are already gone, and he only had 9th printings of issues on hand. Out of his existing back-stock, 1,000 sets of 1-19 were bound up and shipped to Africa for a literacy campaign and everything else was simply recycled.

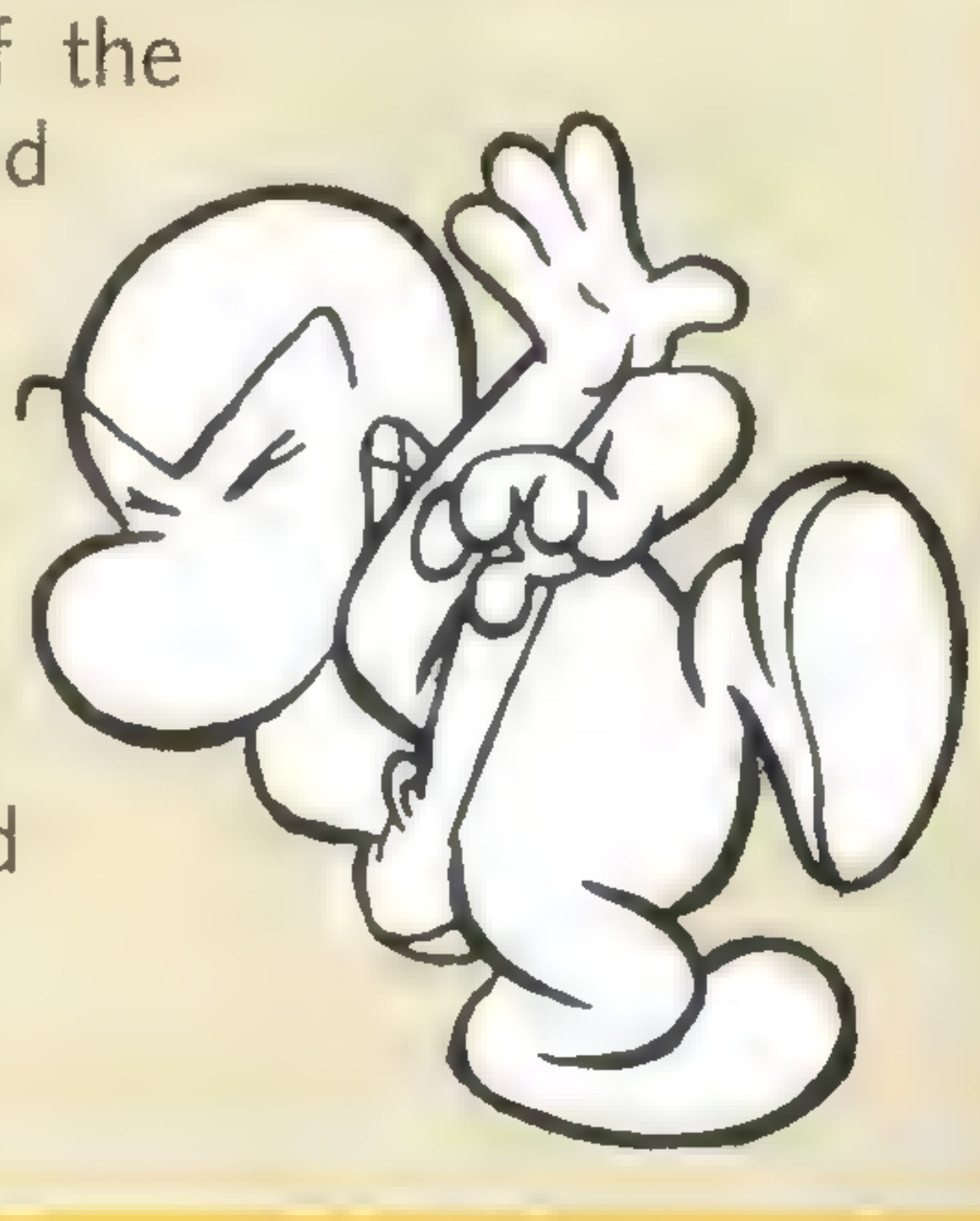
As for the Image deal itself, Smith says, "I can't emphasize enough that I still make all the decisions. What's unusual is not that I am in control. What's unusual is that Image has something set up to allow me that. It is unusual for a publisher to make this kind of a deal with someone." Smith feels that while his benefits of hooking up with Image are obvious, there are benefits for Image as well. Not only do they get to publish a popular and critically acclaimed work, but by including *Bone* (along with *Groo*) in their stable of titles, they are able to diversify their product line. "Its not the same as their other books, it gives them a more diverse line and that's a healthy thing for any business."





Smith was quick to point out that simply because *Bone* now carries the Image "I," it does not mean that fandom can look forward to a Bone/Ripclaw team-up anytime soon. "The Universe in *Bone* is self-contained," Smith cautioned. Still, he accedes that the possibility might exist that the Bones could possibly meet up with some of the other Image characters in some other, neutral format, outside of the confines of *Bone*. "Sometimes you see a Bugs Bunny cartoon and Bugs would be back in King Arthur days. It was never explained, it was just that way." In the same fashion, Smith would be willing to let the *Bone* characters meet other characters for fun, but not within *Bone*, because *Bone* is actually an on-going story that will eventually end (but not for another 40 or 50 issues at least).

For now, though, the story of the Bones, Thorn, Grandma Ben, and the rest of the population of their mystical, mythical land will continue on their respective journeys as they learn the secrets of the dragons, the Lord of the Locusts, and perhaps even why a rat-creature the size of a Shetland pony might like quiche.



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ANIME EYE

by Jeff Yang

VIDEO EYE

New Dominion Tank Police

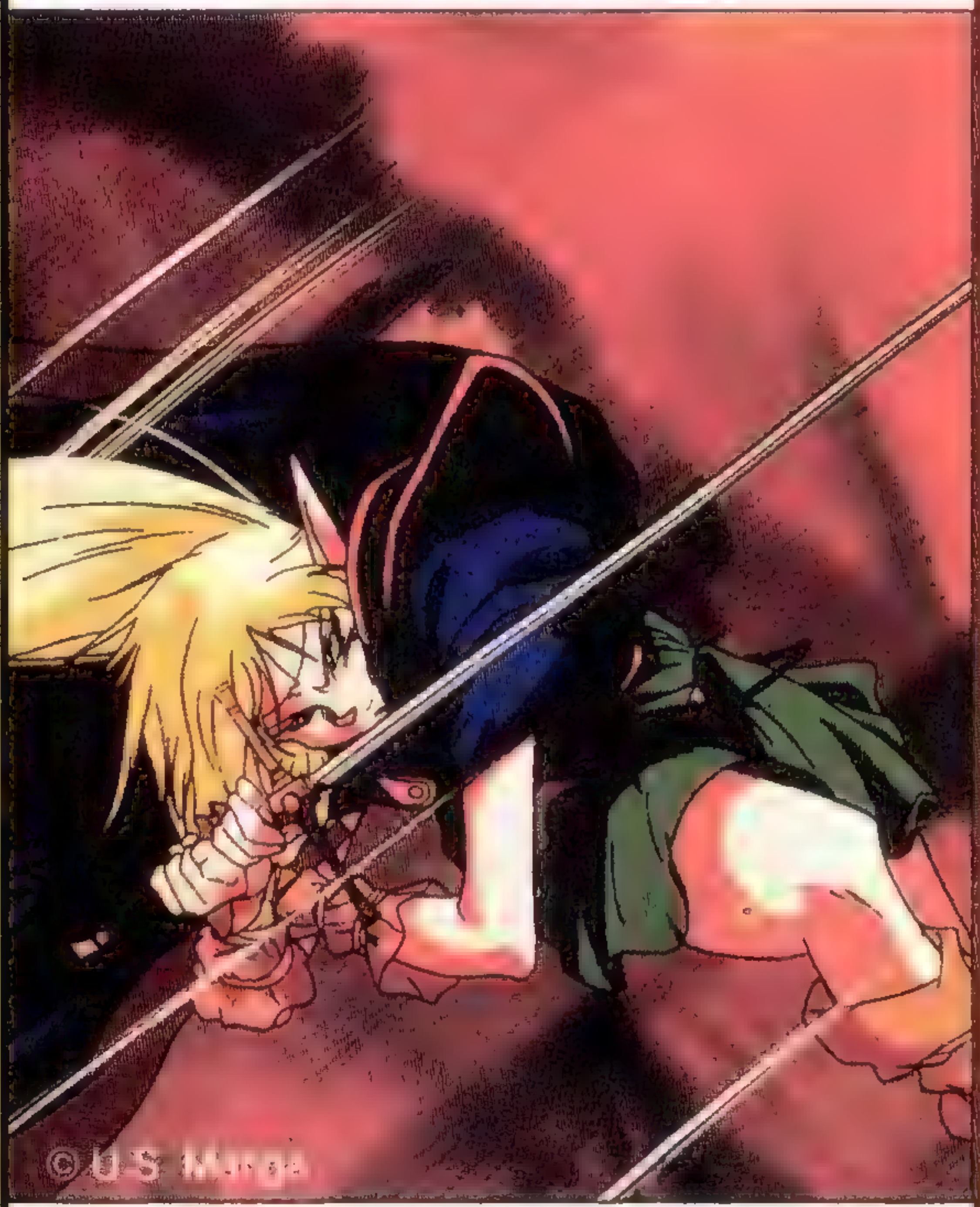
(Volumes 1-3, Manga Entertainment)

Leona, her tank Napoleon and the two troublesome tabbies Annapuma and Unipuma are back in a new series by Shirow Masamune. The sequel to the first popular *Tank Police* series, *New Dominion* features more of the tread-crushing comic crime-busting you've come to expect, plus the requisite bikini-clad Puma Sisters. This time, Leona and the Tank Police are fighting an insidious terrorist plot by corporate baddies to take out their city's beloved Mayor, who has proposed a bill to stop the lucrative manufacture of ultraviolent weapons.

RATING: Worth Watching (but only for fans of the first series)

Record Of Lodoss Wars

(Volumes 1-6, U.S. Manga)


© U.S. Manga

Based on a popular Japanese *Dungeons & Dragons*–like role playing game, *Lodoss Wars* is an epic tale set in a fantasy land broken by a war between the gods of light and darkness. The forces of good are once again imperiled; only a small force of adventurers—a young warrior, an elfin beauty, a stalwart dwarf, a novice priest, a mysterious wizard and a roguish thief—can save what remains of humanity. Gorgeous animation and a lush orchestral score make this an essential add to any dragon-freak's anime collection.

RATING: Must See

Homeroom Affairs

(Volumes 1-3, SoftCel)

What happens when an oversexed student nymphet ends up the ward of her prudish high school teacher? Well...just about what you'd expect: Sex and stuff. The idea of an adult male doing the dirty deed with an obviously underaged girl should be enough to horrify any mature viewer. The fact that immature viewers will probably find this really stimulating is another matter entirely.

RATING: Pass this one up.

TV EYE

Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon

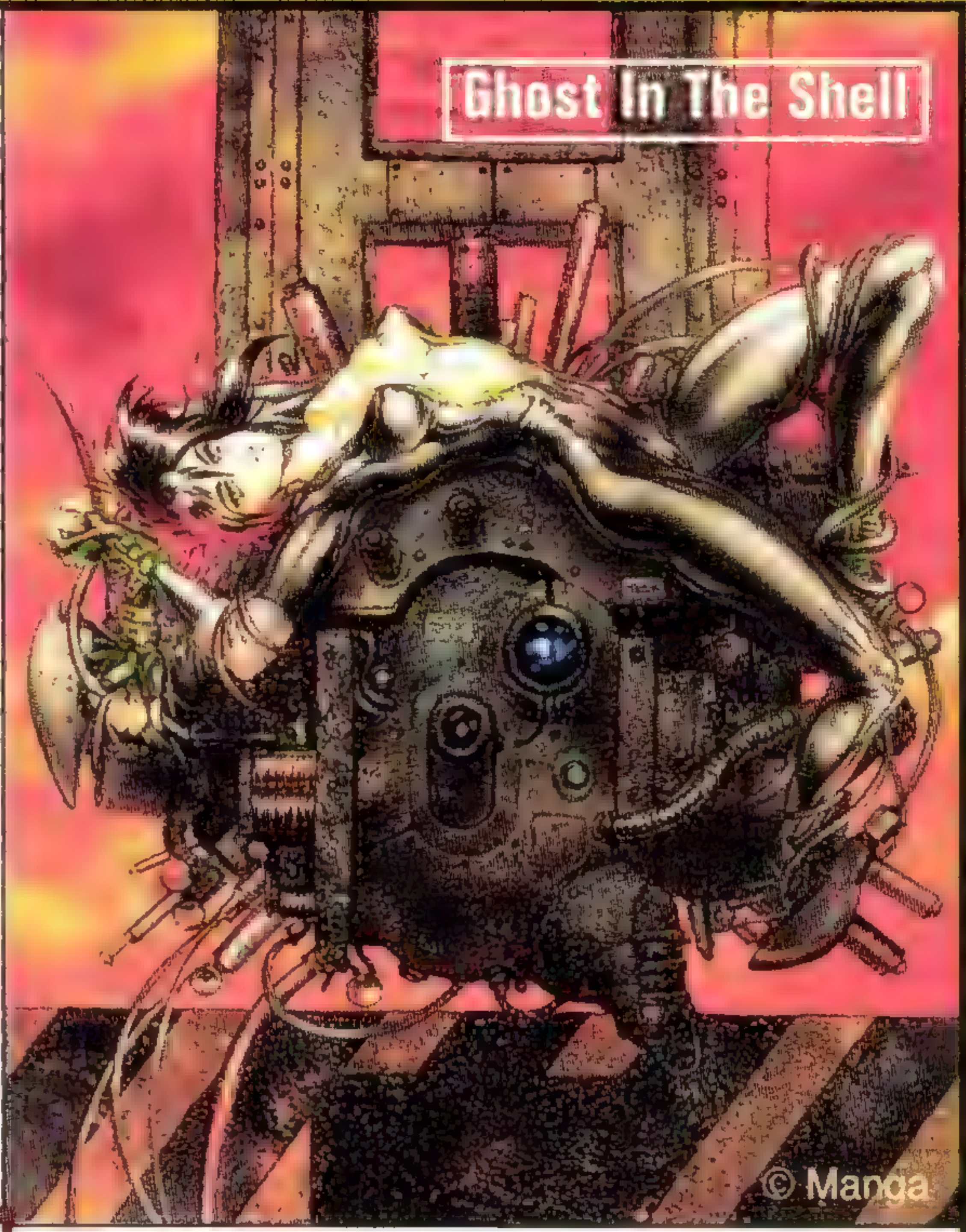
(Weekdays, syndicated TV)

You may have dismissed this series because it's clearly this chick thing: outrageously stupid girl heroines with unconvincing hair, dumb costumes and a color scheme that mostly leans toward the pastels. If so, your loss. *Sailor Moon* may be the victim of the most saccharine marketing campaign since, say, "My Pretty Pony," but this comedy-action anime series has converted millions (male and female alike) in Japan—and spawned a huge cult following here in America. Unfortunately, in most markets, it's shown only at ungodly hours—as early as 5 in the morning. So set your alarms—or better yet, your VCRs.

CINEMA EYE

Ghost In The Shell

(Manga Entertainment, in theaters in December) From the bizarre and brilliant mind of Shirow Masamune (creator of *Appleseed* and *Dominion Tank Police*) comes a breathtaking, full length anime epic—a psychedelic cybertrip through a future world where men are machines, computers are in control and the only reality is virtual. Internal Bureau enforcer Motoko Kusanagi is assigned an impossible mission: to disable the Puppet Master, an omnipotent "virtual agent" programmed in deep secret by the government. Cybernetically enhanced Motoko is much more than a mere human—but so is the Puppet Master. And what will Motoko do when the Master suggests the ultimate temptation...a digital merger that will compile program and person into something very close to god?


Ghost In The Shell

© Manga

EYECATCHES

Coming soon to a video hut near you:

Dragon Knight: Another Knight On The Town (Soft Cel): The first *Dragon Knight*, an "adult fantasy" involving lots of leering and little plot, sucked; this one doesn't look much better....*New Cutey Honey*: Go Nagai's often-naked android superheroine gets down and dirty with more demonic foes....*Legend Of Lemnear* (U.S. Manga): Muscular babe battles an evil dark lord in a fantasy world....*Wicked City* (Orion): Live-action adaptation of the anime *Supernatural Beastie City*—rotten to begin with, made worse by dubbing that will leave you breathless and lunchless.

MORE ANIMÉ-ZING TALES from... MANGA VIDEO™

SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS II THE MOVIE

When alien invaders identified as renegade Zentraedi threaten the alliance, the SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS must resurrect itself after generations of inactivity to fight against enemy forces. Cleverly blending high-tech warfare and an intriguing romance triangle, MACROSS II: The Movie is a must for MANGA fans everywhere.

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In English

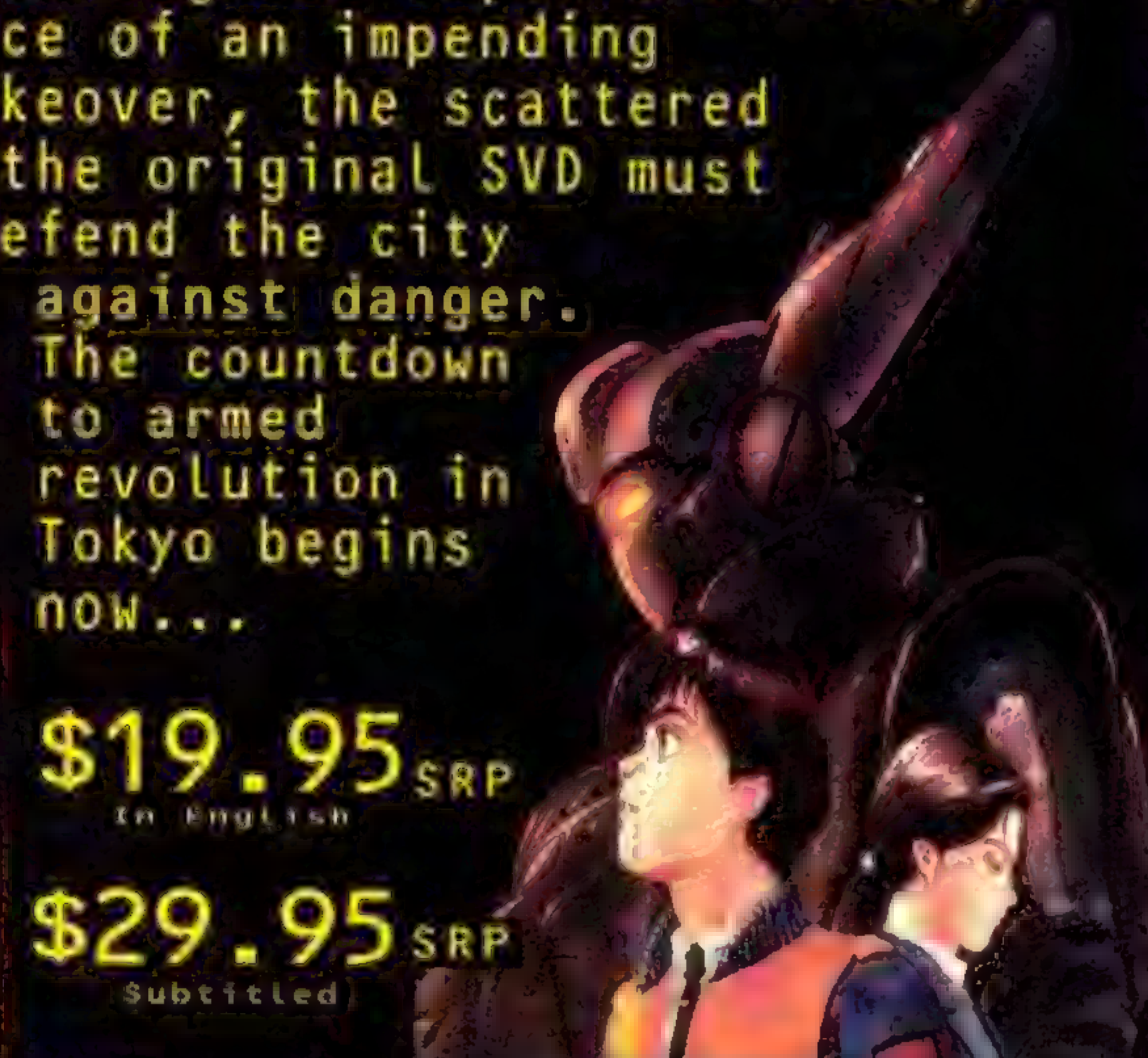
PATLABOR 2

The destruction of a United Nations Labor team in South East Asia signals the beginning of a deadly terrorist plan that threatens to send shockwaves throughout Japan's military. With evidence of an impending military takeover, the scattered members of the original SVD must gather to defend the city against danger. The countdown to armed revolution in Tokyo begins now...

$19.95 SRP
In English

$29.95 SRP
Subtitled

PATLABOR 2
MOBILE POLICE



MANGA MAN

ANGEL COP 5

The 5th in a 6 part series, Angel Cop 5 is an explosive tour through the streets of Tokyo, as the violence mounts and time runs out.

It's a challenge for Angel to stay alive, and the odds against her are rising all the time!

$9.95 SRP
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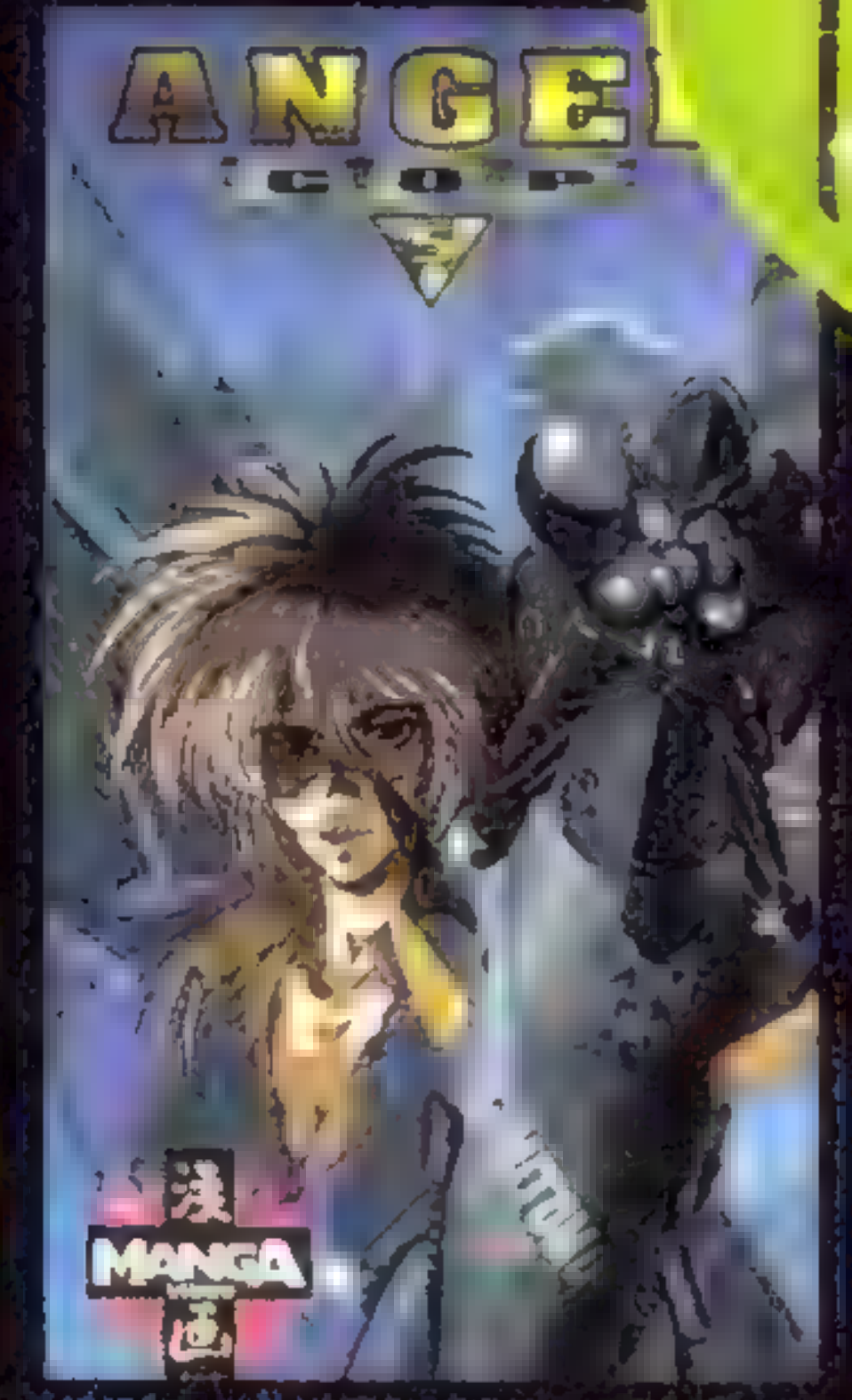
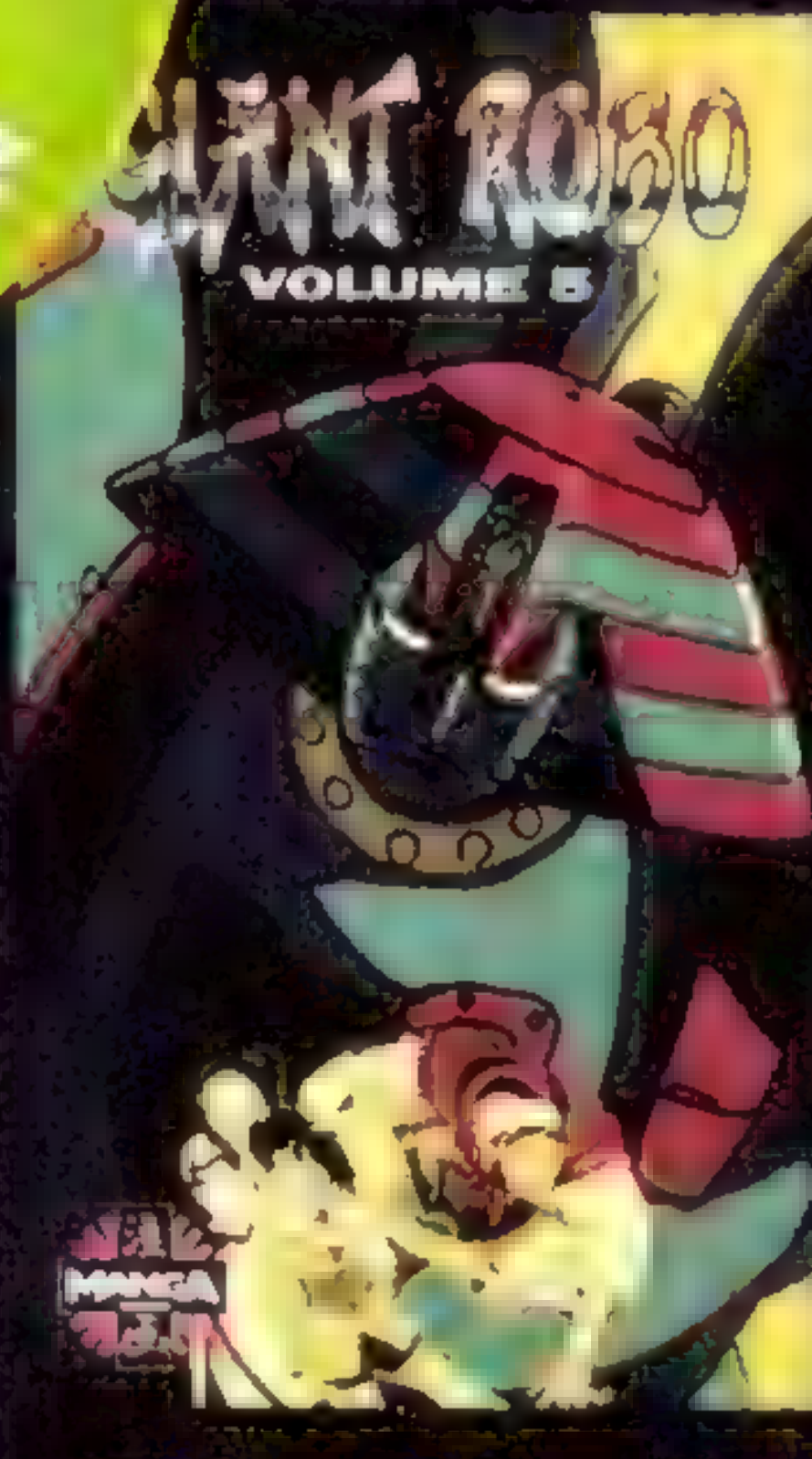


PARENTAL DISCRETION ADVISED

GIANT ROBO VOLUME 5

Using their newest weapon, Big Fire hopes to annihilate the Earth. Giant Robo and comrades, Daisaku and Gynrei, team up once again to stop the detonation of "The Big Balloon." The drama heightens as Daisaku fights to rescue Gynrei and save the world.

$14.95 SRP
In English



Available at SATURDAY MATINEE THE MOVIE STORE and fine Video Stores everywhere

Coming Soon: Masamune Shirow's GHOST IN THE SHELL

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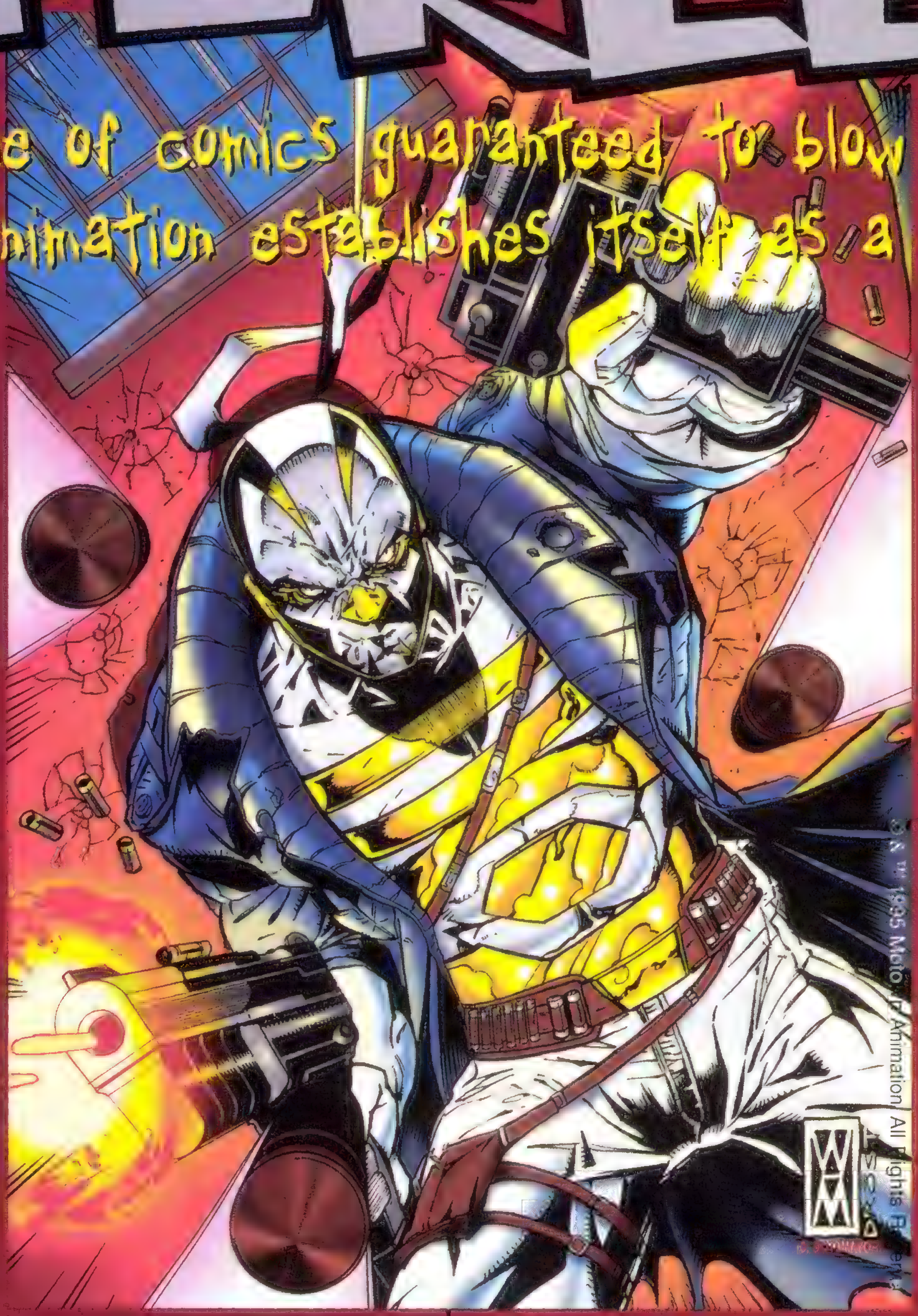
RISING FORCE

With a line of comics guaranteed to blow you away, Motown Animation establishes itself as a contender

by Chris Golden



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Beginning this month, comic book store shelves will be even more crowded, thanks to the arrival of a new publishing company vying for comic fans' attention. This new line of superhero comics is the product of an unlikely alliance, as the animation unit of Motown—known primarily for its classic R&B music stars—and Image Comics, have teamed up to form Motown Machineworks. Michael Davis, formerly one of the creative forces behind DC's Milestone line, is running the show at Motown Machineworks.

"The goal is to breathe a little bit more excitement into the comic book industry by going after new readers and new talent with new ideas," says Davis. "We're going to try to do comics in a way that has been forgotten: fun."

Though Davis was previously involved with Milestone, a line which prided itself on its multi-cultural heroes and was seen largely as a line of black superhero comics, he is quick to push aside any preconceptions about Motown Machineworks.

"As far as the books go, we take more from the original Marvel Comics, from Kirby's Fourth World and from science fiction than we do from today's comics."

The first title from Motown Machineworks is *The Crush*, available now. Written by comics legend Mike Baron and illustrated by the gritty team of N. Steven Harris and Reggie Jones, *The Crush* is a Jekyll & Hyde tale about a criminal psychiatrist who can't leave his work at the office.

"Do you remember the TV show *The Equalizer*?," asked Davis. "The Crush is the Equalizer with an attitude. If there's a problem that's frustrating one of his patients, a woman whose husband terrorizes her...the Crush will go out and find the husband. No more need for therapy. The problem is solved."

Other upcoming Motown titles include *Casual Heroes*, which Davis described as *"90210*, except people can fly," an anthology series called *Machineworks Presents* and *Man Against Time*.

"*Man Against Time* features our main hero, Law, a time traveler," says Davis. "He not only travels through time, but through literature. It has cool comic book applications, but educational applications as well."

From the looks of things, it seems as though Motown Machineworks is starting off with a bang. And if anyone wonders why Davis left Milestone in the first place, the reason is quite simple.

"Basically, I was offered the opportunity to run my own ship. Kirk may have been the coolest cadet ever, but when he got the chance to captain the Enterprise, he was out of there." [*laughs*]

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BEGGAR'S BANQUET

15 THINGS TO BEG FOR THIS XMAS

BY DAN AMRICH & JEFF KITTS

INTRO BY JEFF YANG

It's finally December, and, as you're probably aware, December means two things: Loot and guilt. Loot, because that's what you're going to be demanding large quantities of from your parents and kinfolk. Guilt, because you probably don't deserve it after treating them like crap all year. Then again, that's their problem, not yours, and besides, they never get you what you ask for anyway. Not that it doesn't hurt to try. With that in mind, here's our Big Begging List Of Cool Stuff You Really Need.

The Harley-Davidson can wait 'til your birthday.

GET THIS TREE OUTTA MY BUTT!

AEROSPACE SUB-WOOFER

(Interact Game Products)

Tired of listening to video game explosions that sound like farts? Or race car engines that sound like hair dryers? Well, if incredible sound is just as important to you as great graphics, then Interact Products' Aerospace Sub-Woofer is just the ticket. This magical white box will transform just about any game system (SNES, Genesis, PC, even Walkmen and Discmen) into a booming cannon of gorgeous sound. In addition to the added power and volume the Sub-Woofer generates (thanks to the 50-watt internal amplifier), it also makes standard explosions sound like thunder, race car engines sound like high-performance Indy cars and gunfire sound like the real deal. Other products, like Vivid's NuReality system, have improved video game sound in the past—but the Aerospace Sub-Woofer takes game sound to unprecedented levels of greatness. $89.95

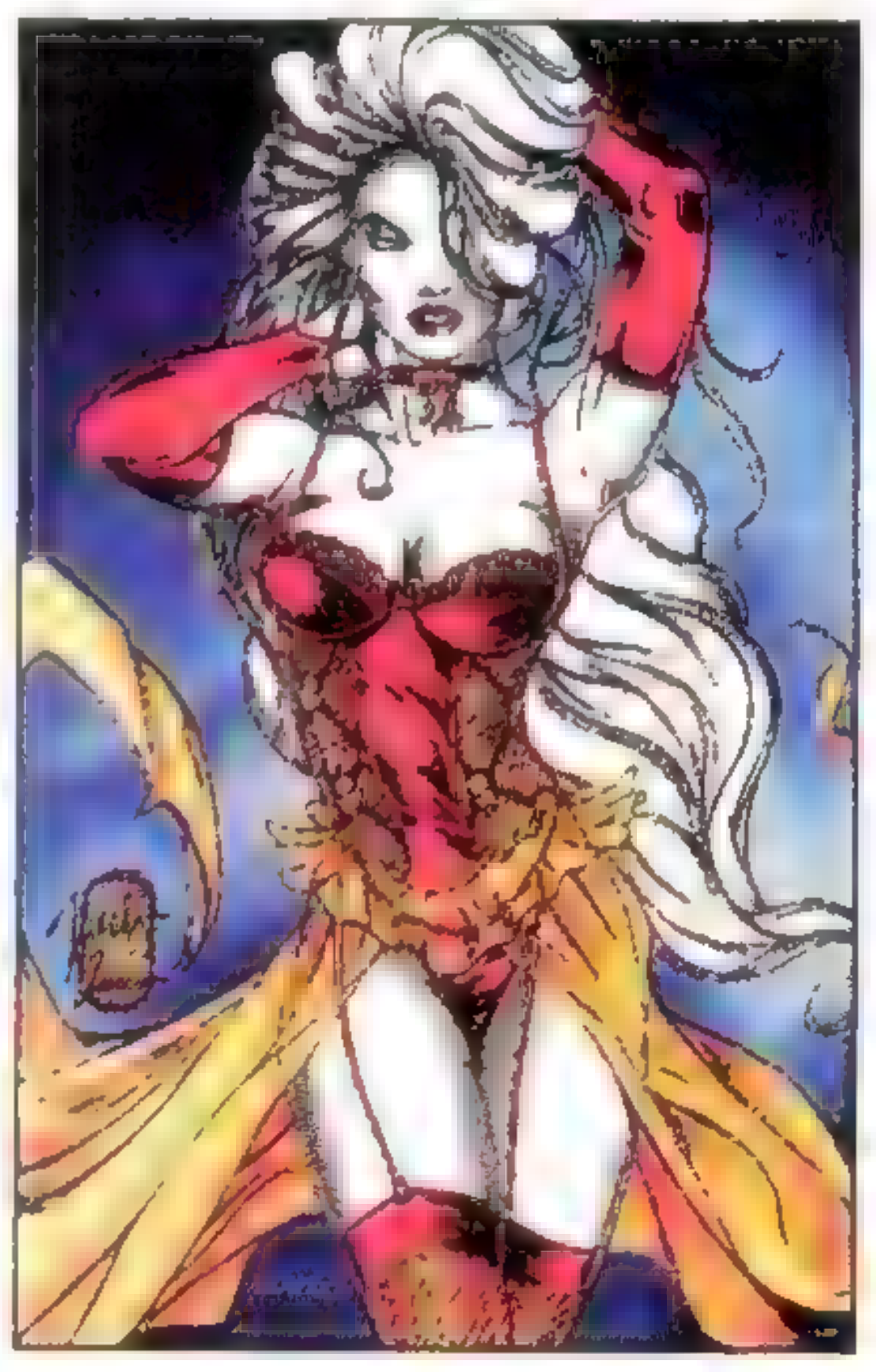
(Interact Game Products, [410] 785-5661)

AEROSPACE WOOFER

LADY DEATH IN LINGERIE #1

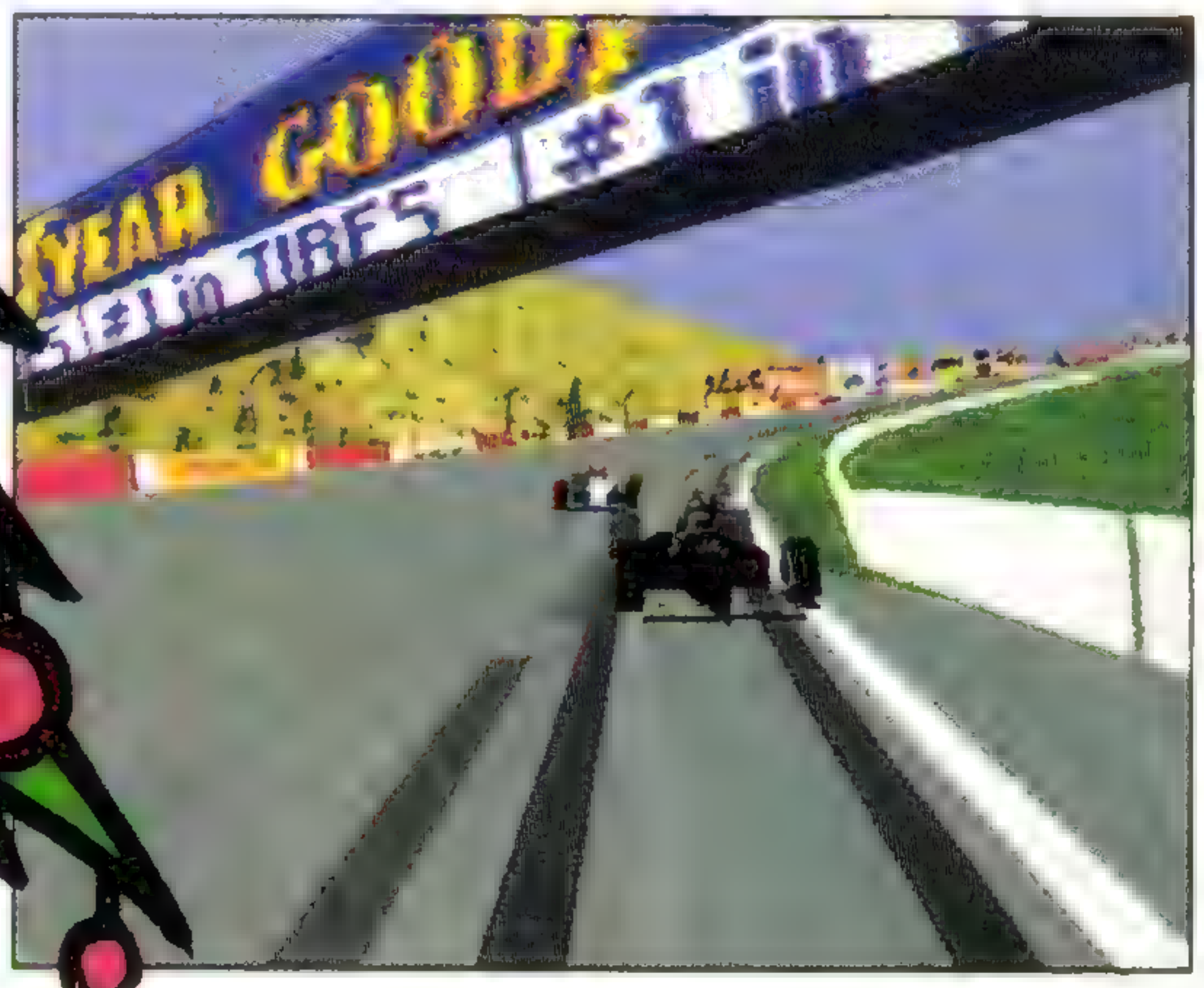
(Chaos! Comics)

This naughty-nightie special issue came out in August, but you can still find it on store shelves for cover price...for now. Last time Lady Death did a pin-up book, last year's *Swimsuit Special*, it shot up in value almost immediately. Hey, you can't argue when it comes to Lady Death's assets. So, before you wind up kicking yourself and forking over major bucks to some slimy collector to see Hope in all her skimpy glory, grab *Lady Death In Lingerie* and check out the interpretations by Jim Balent, Quesada & Palmiotti, Louis Small, Jr., Mike Deodato, Jr., Caesar, William Tucci, Buzz, Walter McDaniel and many more.



INDYCAR RACING II

(Windows 95/DOS/Power Mac CD-ROM, Papyrus Design Group)



For those who prefer Indy cars to the monster stock cars found in the glorious auto racing sim *NASCAR Racing*, the Papyrus Design Group have finally delivered *IndyCar Racing II* for the DOS and Windows 95 PC platforms. While the first *IndyCar Racing* only hinted at the greatness that would be achieved with last year's *NASCAR Racing*, *IndyCar Racing II* takes things a pit-stop further. Among its many impressive features, the game offers VGA and SVGA graphics, 15 updated and authentic Indycar tracks, a Paintkit option, improved car damage (watch those fenders *fly*) and a save game feature. For those who in the past year have run their *NASCAR* tires down to the rim, the glorious *IndyCar Racing II* will refuel your need for speed.

MAXMEDIA TV MINI: PC-To-TV Converter

(Umax, $179)

Imagine engaging in a friendly DeathMatch

of *DOOM* and watching your buddy's guts splatter brilliantly across your monster 32-inch television screen instead of that pathetic little 13-inch computer monitor. Sound like a beautiful thing? It is—and it's only possible with UMAX's new Maxmedia TV Mini, the ultimate way to transfer any image displayed on a computer monitor to a large screen television. Weighing less than half a pound and small enough to fit into a coat pocket, the Maxmedia TV Mini is perfect for traveling—meaning you no longer have to play *Hardball 5* on a laptop at grandma's house. Just jack into her big-screen TV and tell her to go watch *The Golden Girls* somewhere else. The TV Mini is a breeze to set up (just plug into the computer's VGA card and keyboard port and connect the video output to the TV set—no messy cables!) and requires only standard computer power (DOS 3.3 or higher, Windows 3.1, a 3.5" floppy disc drive, a VGA or SVGA card, 640 KB of RAM and a TV with composite video input or S-VHS input). You can even connect it to a VCR to record some of your greatest computer gaming achievements. For $179, you can't go wrong with the Maxmedia TV Mini. (*UMAX Technologies, [800] 562-0311*)

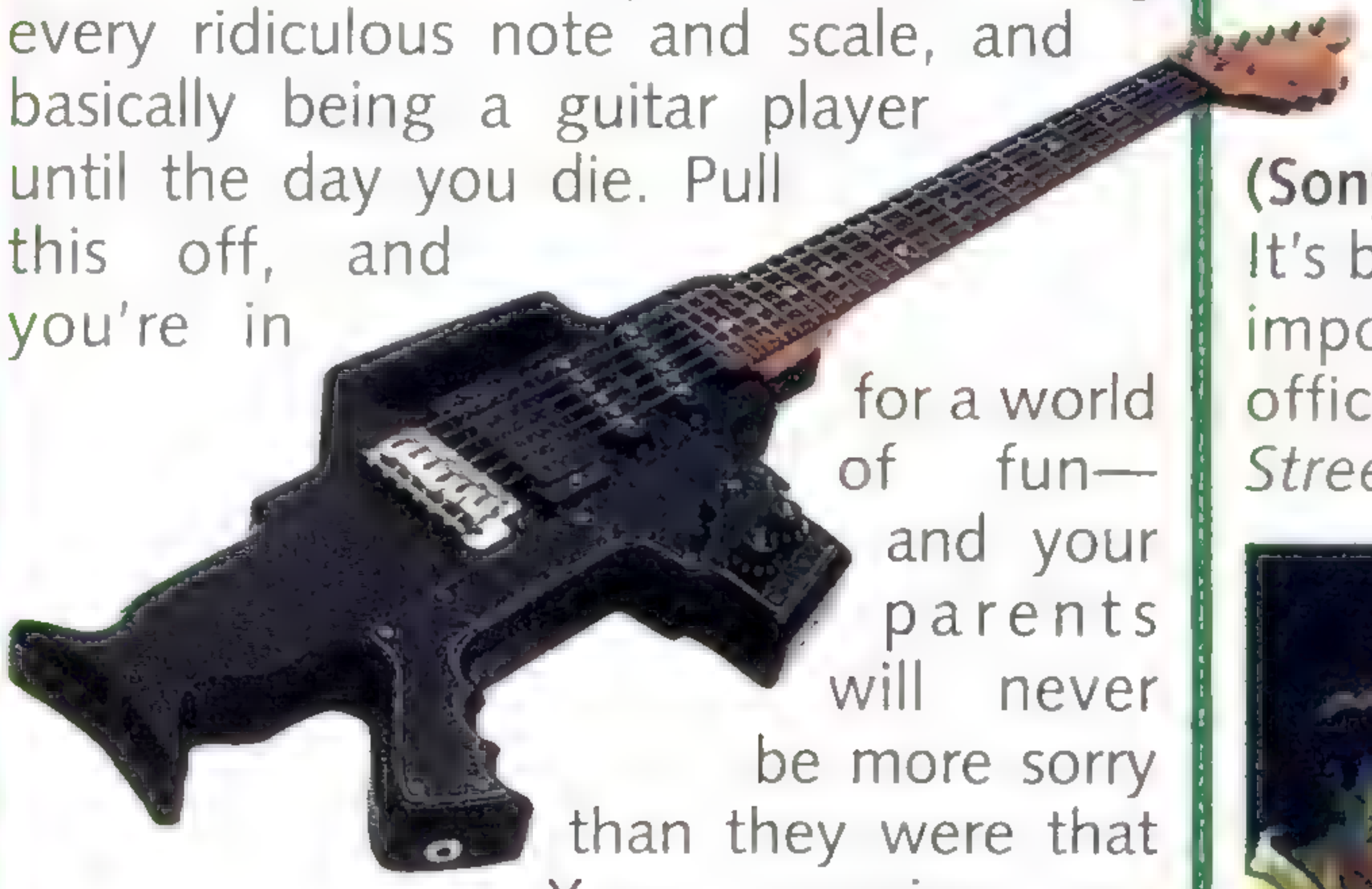
BIG-BUCKS GIFT CERTIFICATE TO BLOCKBUSTER

GIFT CERTIFICATE
$5
Make It A BLOCKBUSTER Night
$10
Make It A BLOCKBUSTER Night

Consider the long-term damage you could create with a gift like this.... When that violent urge to play *Destruction Derby* hits you, just march on down to your local 'Buster and rent yourself a PlayStation. Feel like watching *Speed* for the hundredth time? No problem. Need a big strategy guide book for *Donkey Kong Country* or one of those giant bags of Skittles? Blockbuster's your answer—and with a hefty gift certificate (settle for nothing less than $100), all this and more is right at your fingertips. And you'll never have to shell out a dime.

A GUITAR

This one will require a bit of deception on your part. In order to scam an electric guitar out of your parents, you'll have to make them believe that you're serious about taking lessons, practicing, learning every ridiculous note and scale, and basically being a guitar player until the day you die. Pull this off, and you're in for a world of fun—and your parents will never be more sorry than they were that Xmas morning you first plugged in, struck a chord and cracked the plaster in the living room. Of course, playing guitar has even greater advantages. Now when you stand in front of the mirror and pretend to be Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong, you won't look like such a dork. Playing guitar is also a good way to strengthen your fingers—which means no more video game-related thumb ache. And most importantly, chicks dig guys who play guitar. (*Shown here: the Shooting Star HSS from Lindert Guitars.*)



STAR WARS TRILOGY

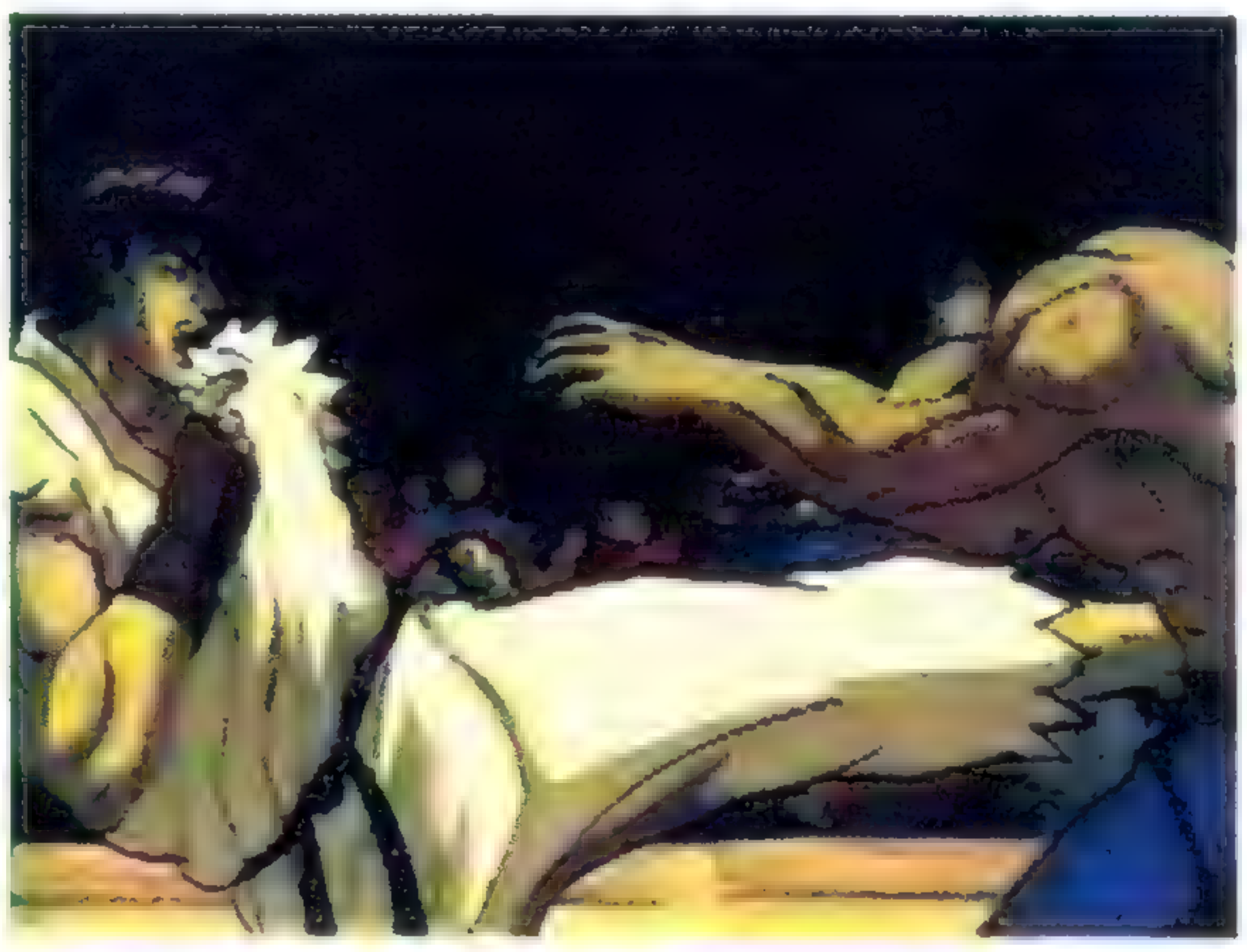
STAR WARS TRILOGY
STAR WARS A NEW HOPE
THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
RETURN OF THE JEDI

It's here...again. Yet another version of the *Star Wars* film trilogy hit store shelves just a few months ago—and unless you score them this Xmas, you won't be able to get them past January '96. And whether or not you already own a previous version of *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* or *Return Of The Jedi*, this new package is a must for any fan of George Lucas' sci-fi masterpiece. Available individually or as a three-tape package, the new versions mark the first time the *Star Wars* trilogy has been issued with George Lucas' trademark THX certification, making the picture and sound quality better than ever. As an added bonus, each video contains a never-before-seen interview with Lucas himself regarding the past, present and future of his epic space adventure.

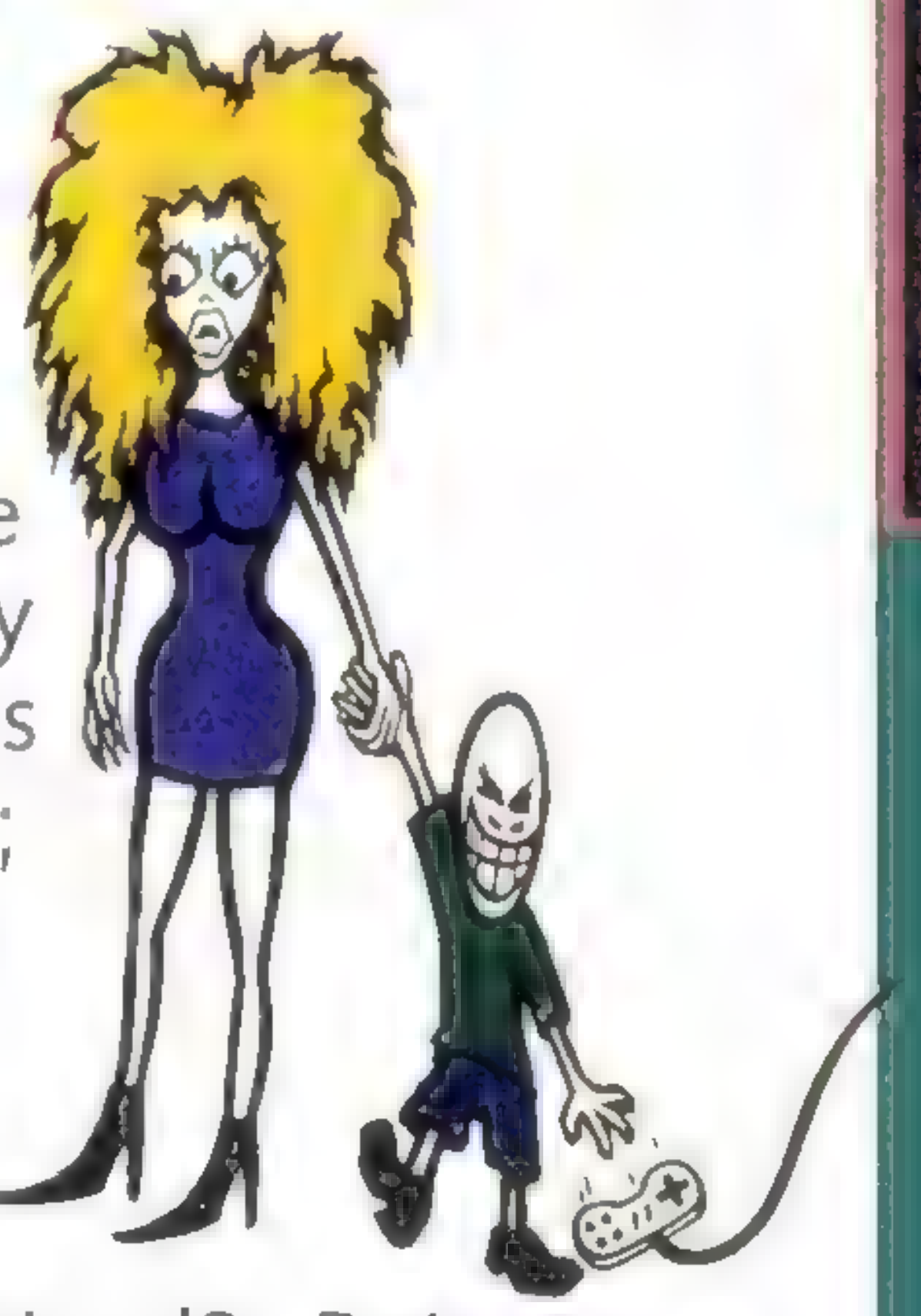
STREET FIGHTER II: THE ANIMATED MOVIE

(Sony Music Video)

It's been floating around in bootleg and import versions for about a year, but an official English-dubbed version of the *Street Fighter II* anime flick is finally out in the U.S., courtesy of Sony Music Video. All your favorite *SFII* characters appear, and they're much closer to their arcade counterparts than they were in that horrendous live-action movie (in other words, E. Honda is a sumo wrestler here, not a cameraman). The art is cool, the bloody fights are cooler, there's tons of great special effects (love those lightning bolts before a fireball) and we get to see Chun-Li beat the stuffing out of Vega while she's wearing nothing more than a nightie. If only the animated *MK* video could be this good....



A GIRLFRIEND



Virtual Valerie, copies of FLUX and late-night online cybersex sessions with people you *think* are horny girls are all good ways to work up a sweat; but nothing beats the real thing. C'mon, isn't it about time you went out and got yourself a girlfriend? But remember, this is one gift you need to score yourself—your parents will be of no help here.

VIRTUAL i-O i-GLASSES

(Virtual i-O)

Virtual i-O's i-glasses deliver, hands-down, the coolest possible way to play your favorite PC games. Put on these surprisingly lightweight virtual reality goggles/headphones (they're eight measly ounces) and prepare to be completely immersed in your computer game of choice. But unlike the lame-ass VictorMaxx headset, which were essentially televisions real close to your eyes, the $800 i-glasses provide head-tracking support for games like *Magic Carpet*, *Dark Forces* and *Descent*. If you turn your head left, your view of the game world you're in changes too; to look around the corner, simply turn your head and *look around the corner*. Without the head-tracking (and for $200 less), the i-glasses can be used as a regular monitor (well, the equivalent of an 80-inch monitor viewed from 11 feet away) for normal Sega, Sony and Nintendo games, as well as TV, videos or laserdiscs. Imagine—tell Mom you're watching PBS but jack the i-glasses into The Playboy Channel and have a ball....

MAGIC: THE GATHERING DECKMASTER GIFT SET

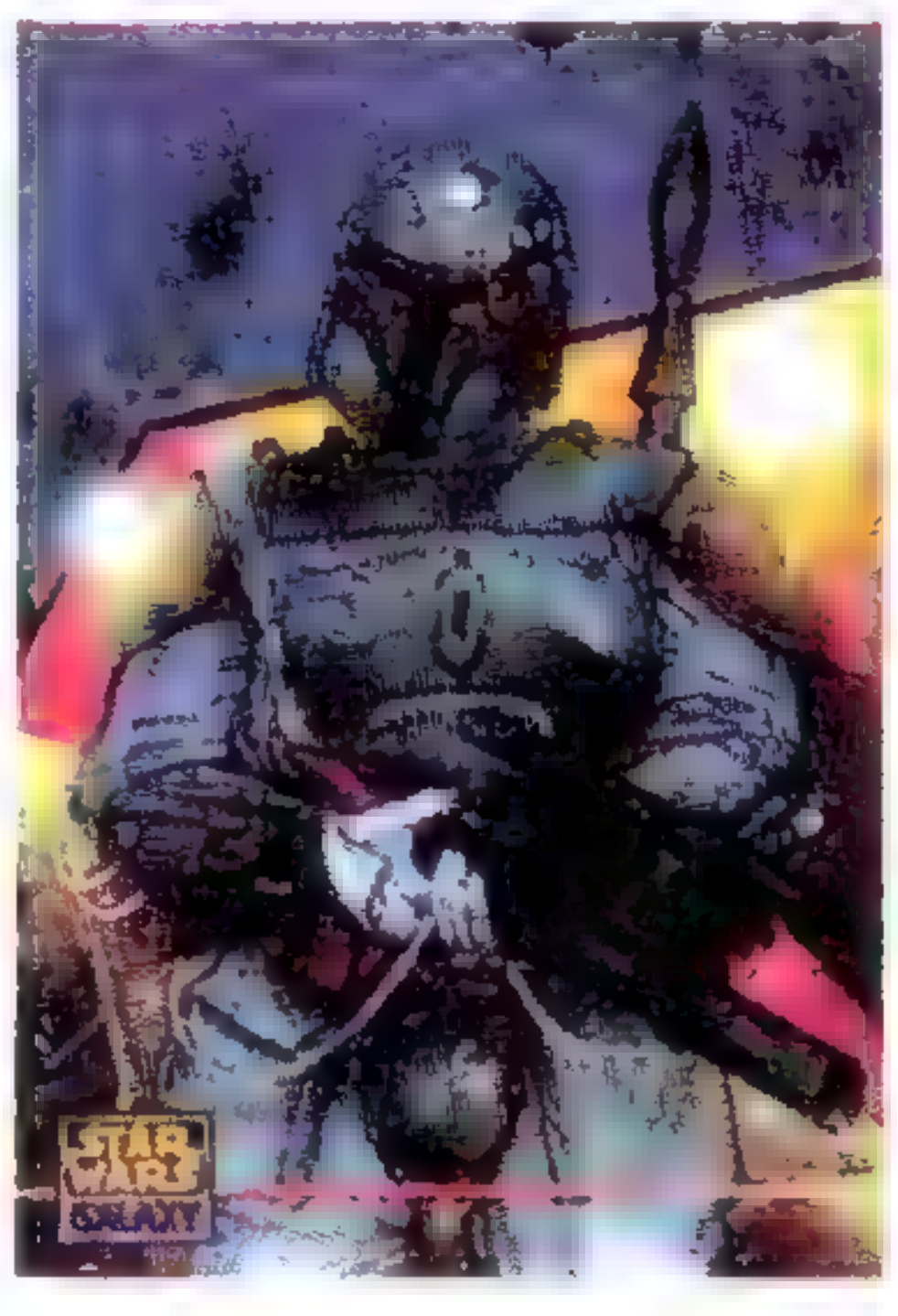
(Wizards Of The Coast)

MAGIC
The Gathering
DECKMASTER

Now back in print with updated Fourth Edition cards, Wizards Of the Coast's new *Magic* gift set includes two 60-card decks, 15 glass bead tokens and an accompanying bag, and a nice, large, friendly rule booklet that's easier to understand than earlier versions. For $20, it supplies everything two people need to go head-to-head in the most popular collectible card game on the planet, but it's even cooler for one person to get the set—that way, they have 120 *Magic* cards to mix and match to their liking plus plenty of glass tokens.

A SET OF STAR WARS GALAXY SERIES III TRADING CARDS

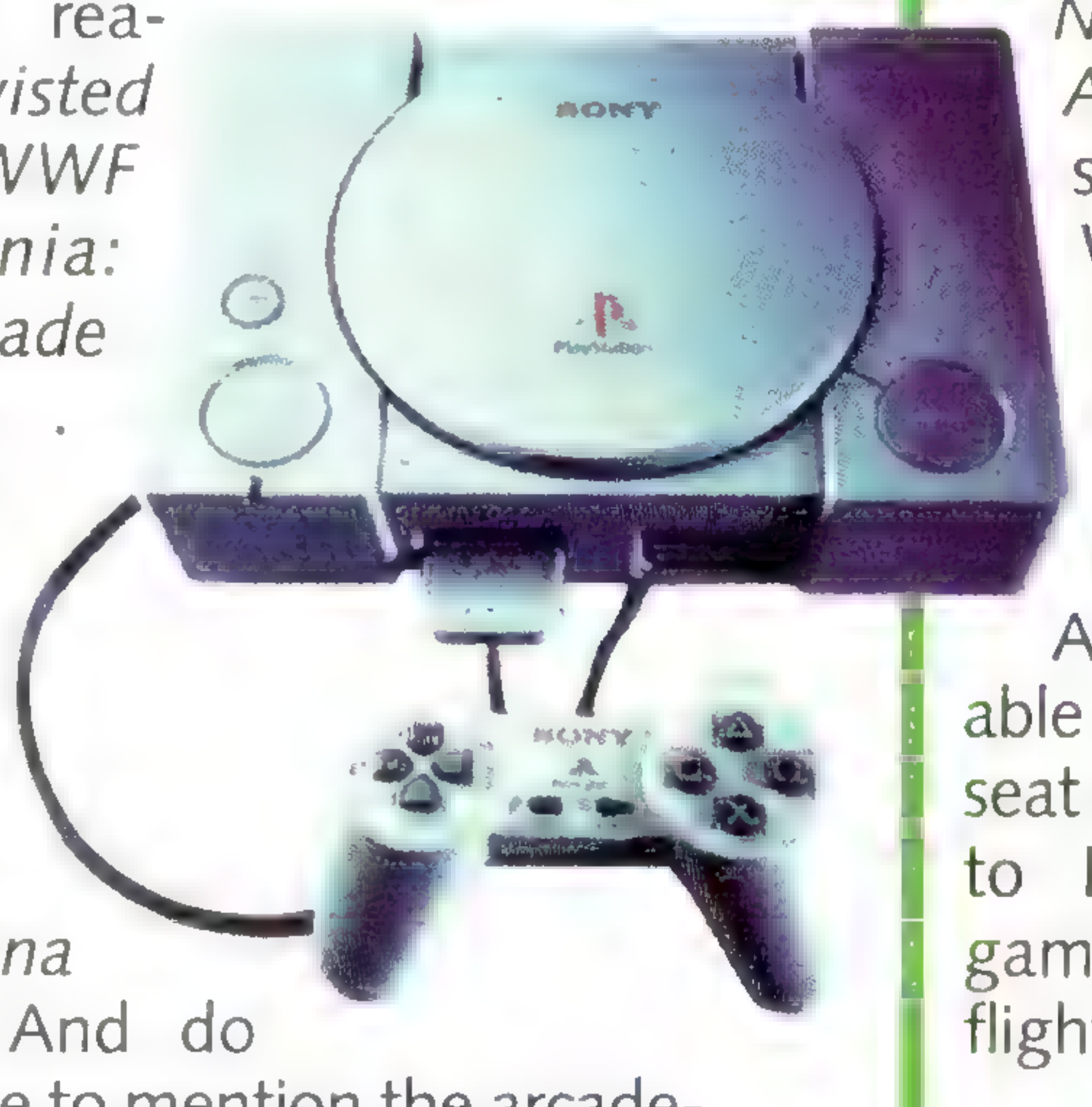
(Topps)



The third installment of Topps' acclaimed *Star Wars Galaxy* trading card series is already available, and would certainly make an ideal gift. *SWGIII*, a 90-card set, features a special tribute to *The Empire Strikes Back*, some computer-generated art and four levels of chase cards—including two in every pack! The set is rounded out by six new foil-etched cards (which complete the *Star Wars Galaxy* panorama), six Topps Clearzone Chrome cards by Image Comics artists J. Scott Campbell, Alex Garner and Brian Denham and 12 foil-stamped insert cards featuring art from the *Star Wars* video game series from LucasArts. With all that at stake, you can't go wrong with a complete *SWGIII* set.

SONY PLAYSTATION

You've heard the rumors. You've seen the screens. You've played it in the store. Deep down, you know you've *gotta* have Sony's new 32-bit machine this year, no matter what Sega and Nintendo have up their sleeves. Great 3-D capabilities. Over-the-top graphics. CD-quality sound. A bitchin' and deceptively comfortable controller. Want more reasons? *Twisted Metal*. *WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game*. *Destruction Derby*. *Tekken*. *Madden NFL 96*. *Wipeout*. *Battle Arena Toshinden*. And do we even have to mention the arcade-perfect *Mortal Kombat 3*? Beg a lot for this one. Do chores if you have to. It's worth every penny of the $300 your parents will be shelling out. And don't forget: PlayStation memory cards make great stocking stuffers.



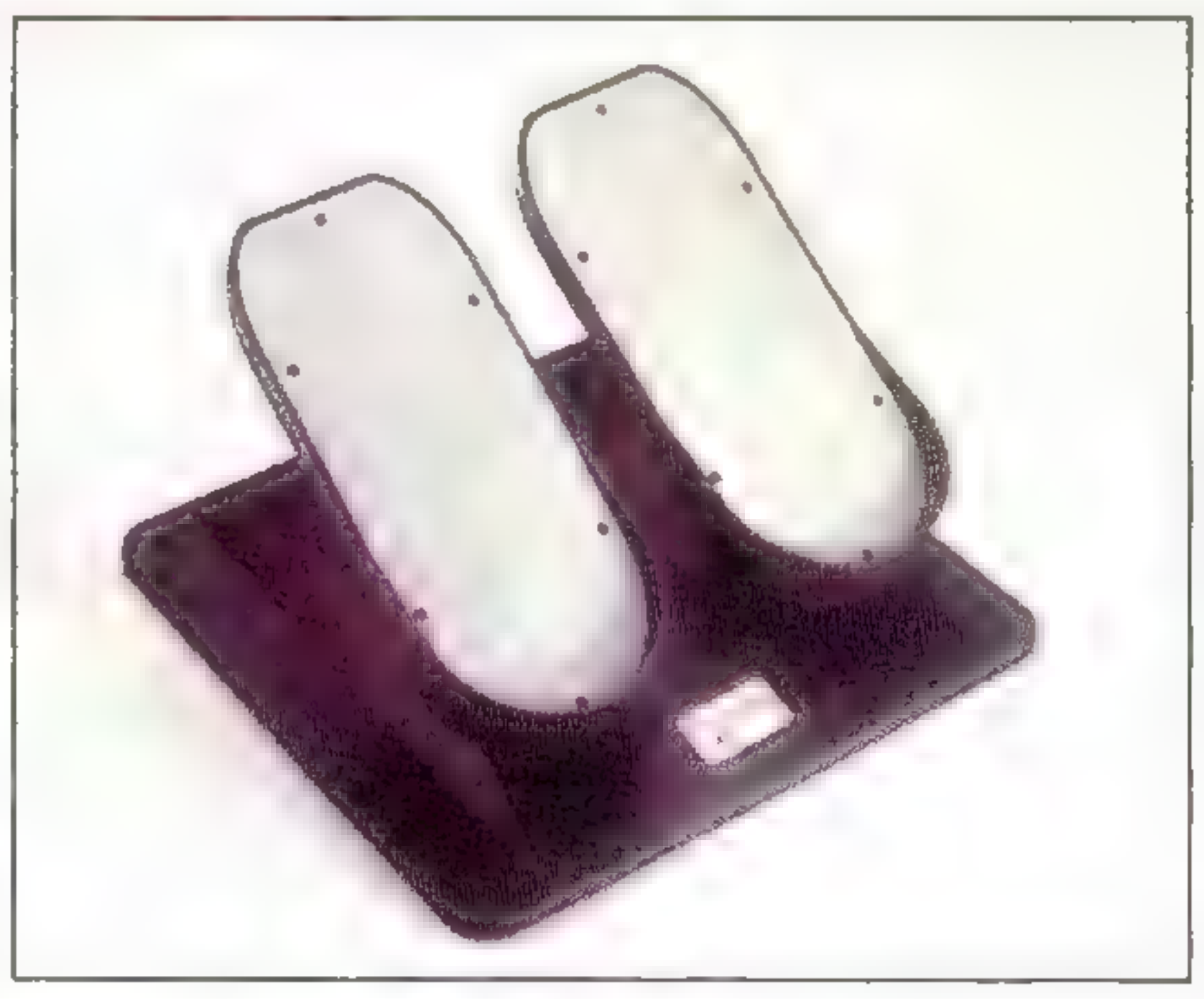
CUSTOM PLAYSTATION CONTROLLERS

(Ascii, Mad Catz)

What better to go along with your brand-spankin'-new PlayStation than some extra controllers? The unit only ships with one, so if you want to have any kind of fun with your friends, you'll need more. A great replacement pad is the Advanced Controller by Mad Catz; it mimics the Sony pad's design but adds auto-fire, turbo and slow-mo buttons and features more comfortable contours for your fingers. Best of all, the d-pad is a standard circle-type, with no dividers between directions, which makes control much more natural. For the upscale fighting player, Asciiware's Ascii Specialized Joystick for the PlayStation offers arcade-style joystick control, with giant buttons laid out in a 2x4 pattern, color-coded auto-fire/turbo/slow-mo switches for each button and a big sturdy metal base. Take *that*, Sofia!

CH PEDALS

(CH Products)



If using the A and Z keys on your computer keyboard to accelerate and brake when playing high-speed racing sims like *NASCAR Racing* or *Al Unser Jr.'s Arcade Racing*, you need to request a set of CH Pedals from CH Products. With an independent pivot movement accelerator and brake control, the CH Pedals move and feel just like the real thing, adding tremendous authenticity to the at-home racing experience. At $79.95, the CH Pedals are an affordable way to really put you in the driver's seat when it comes to PC racing games or flight sims.

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gamereviews

TV DOG
Yes! Yes! Oh, yes! More! YES!

LICKIN' DOG
A satisfying experience. You'll get off on it.

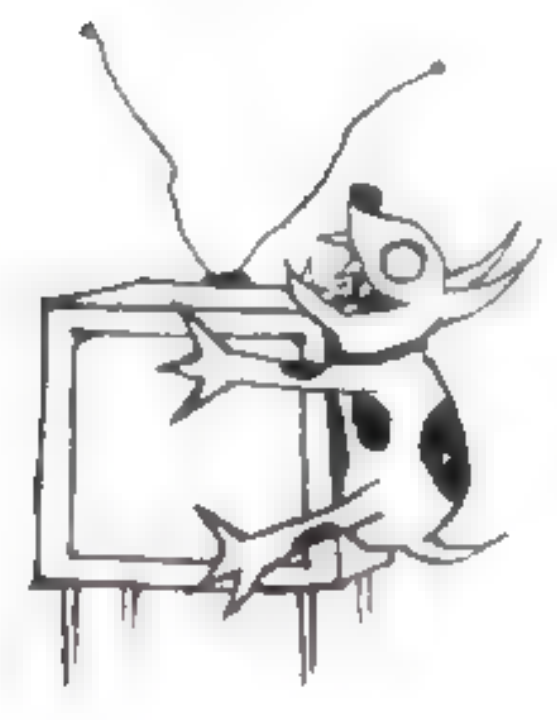
BONE DOG
Knick-knack, paddy-whack, who cares?

PISSIN' DOG
Flush it!

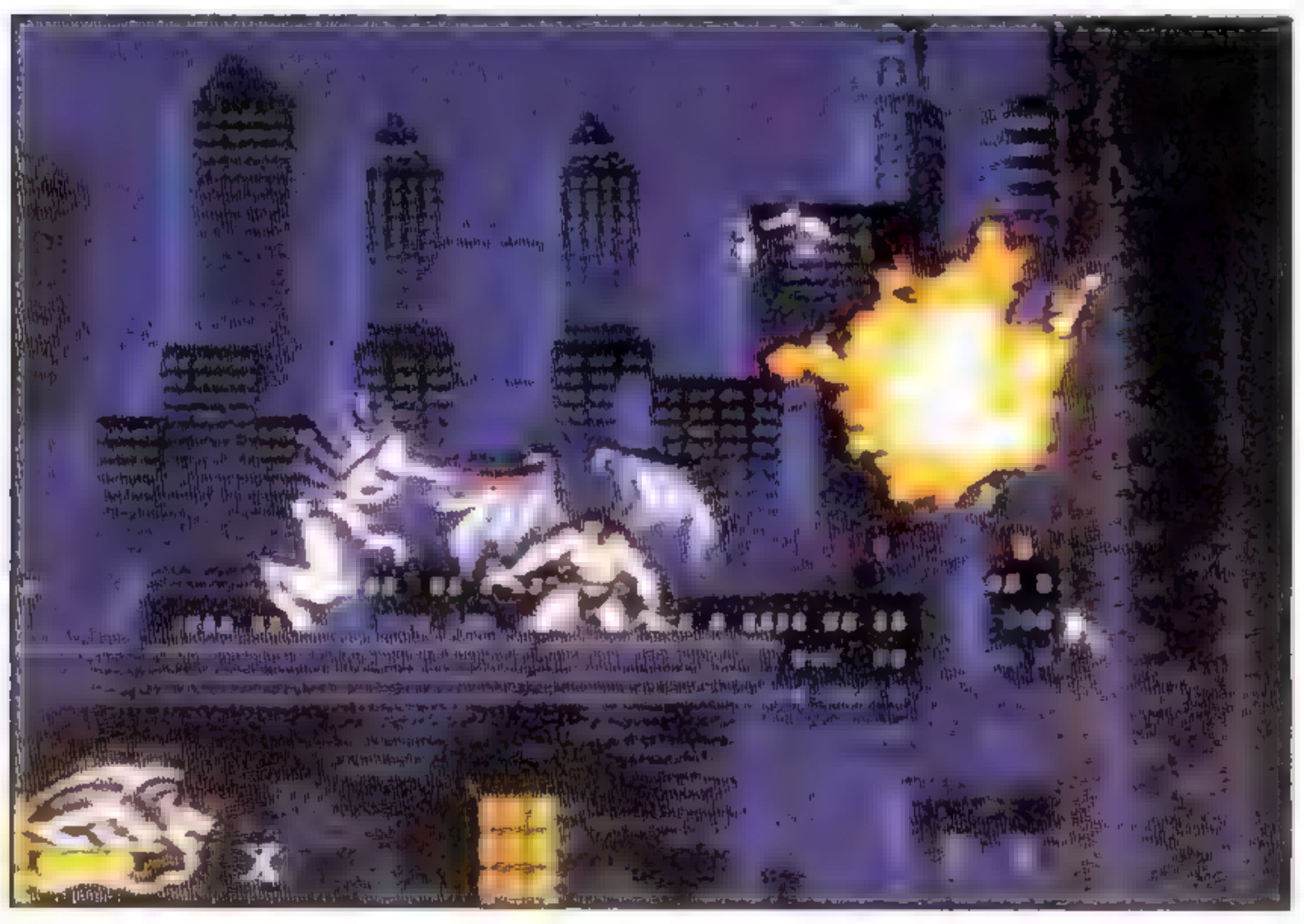
GENESIS

GARGOYLES

SYSTEM: Genesis
MANUFACTURER: Buena Vista Interactive
GRAPHIX: A-
CONTROL: B+
SOUND: A
PASSWORD/SAVE: NO
BUY/RENT/PASS: BUY
OVERALL: A



Hot on the heels of Disney's impressive *Aladdin* and *Lion King* platforms comes *Gargoyles*, the premiere effort from Disney offshoot Buena Vista. Based on the animated series of the same name, *Gargoyles* is 24 megs of stone-man excitement and one of the best games to hit the Genesis in a long time.



You control Goliath, the leader of the Gargoyles, as he scales walls, flips and soars through 18 levels of action ranging from medieval Scotland to present day Manhattan. You'll take on a series of Goliath's foes on your quest to destroy the evil Eye of Odin and trade blows with everything from Vikings to cyborgs along the way.

Any fan of the cartoon series (and if you've seen it, you're probably a fan) will enjoy this adaptation. The graphics are very strong and the lighting provides the mood for each level as it eerily reflects off Goliath's wings. The controls are excellent as Goliath is able to move as he does in the TV show, swooping into the air with a flap of his wings and descending to crash through rooftops. The music, including a direct translation of the series theme, is impressive for the Genesis and it'll immerse you in the action as you slice through the bad guys.

This game isn't flawless, though: Goliath can come across as a bit of a wimp, especially when puny Vikings put up their shields and you've gotta swipe 'till the cows come home to get them. Then, when you finally hit them, they let off a strange shriek that may have people turning their heads.

For your aggravating enjoyment, similar to *The Lion King*, each level seems to have one nightmare of a control puzzle. In one, you swing from claw to claw, able to hold on only when they're closed. If you mess up, of course, you start over. And the characters are a bit too small to show off the excellent graphics.

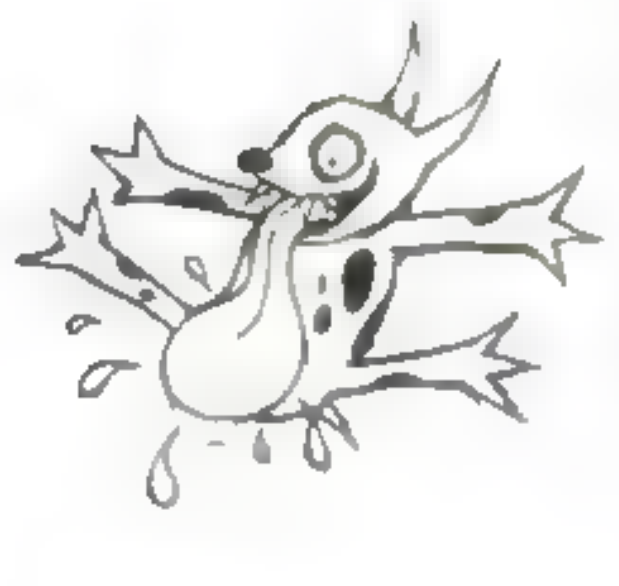
If you overlook the annoying situations, though, and play on a 30-inch television, *Gargoyles* will get your pulse truckin'. As Genesis games go, this is the best of the year.

—HUGH STERBAKOV

SEGA SATURN

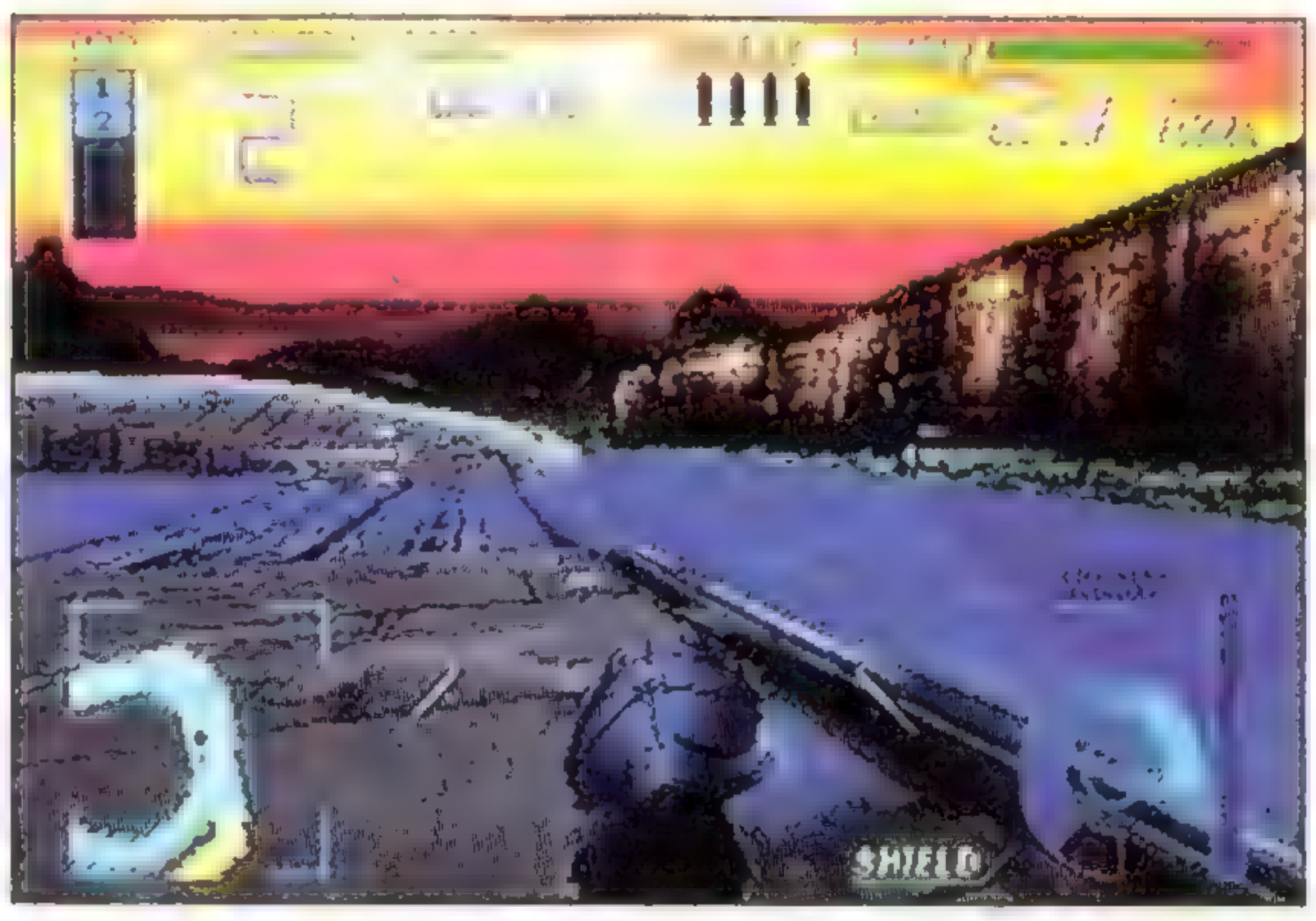
CYBER SPEEDWAY

SYSTEM: Sega Saturn
MANUFACTURER: Sega
GRAPHIX: B+
CONTROL: B+
SOUND: B
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: B+



Sega's first stab at a racing game for the Saturn was a translation of the popular arcade game, *Daytona USA*. This time around, Sega puts you behind the wheel of a futuristic hovercraft (cashing in on the latest rage, no doubt) in *Cyber Speedway*.

In most respects, *Cyber Speedway* is a terrific game. Visually, the game features beautiful texture-mapped graphics. Despite some slight draw-in problems, this is a big improvement over *Daytona*. The controls take some time to adjust to, but once mastered add the all important element of skill to the game.



In Story Mode, you play the part of Clay Shaw, Earth's top-ranked racer. Battling through a field of the toughest competitors in the galaxy, the destiny of the planet lies in your ability to become the Top Gun of the Cyber Speedway. Perhaps the biggest and most noticeable improvement over *Daytona* is the addition of the split screen two-player mode. In this mode, a racer can win by finishing the course first or by destroying the opponent's hovercraft. The action is fast and furious and a number of gameplay elements add a touch of strategy to the mix. For instance, you may select from an assortment of five different vehicles, each with varying strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, the 11 playable race tracks offer twists, turns, weapon power-ups and a number of hidden shortcuts. And while the shortcuts do allow a driver to save precious time, some contain explosive booby traps.

These features definitely go a long way in enhancing the replayability and overall value of *Cyber Speedway*. Sega's Arcade Racer steering wheel is very effective when used with the game, as it virtually guarantees smoother racing.

Cyber Speedway is yet another quality title in the ever-growing library of Saturn games, and this will prove to be an important element in the biggest race of all: the race for the crown in the next generation system wars.

—ANTHONY LYNCH

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Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at $2.00 each and one tie-breaker at $1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 55% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will split the value of the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid

	H				___	M Y S T
		E			___	E R Y
P	I	N	C	H	W	
	R				___	W O
S					___	R D

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCH .....W	PRESS ....K	BLAST ......A	WRECK .....D
BREAK ......Z	PUNCH .....S	SPRAY C	TURBO V
STOMP .....T	STAND ......R	PRESS ....E	DREAM ....O
CRUSH I	SCORE .....H	SLANT L	CHASE......P

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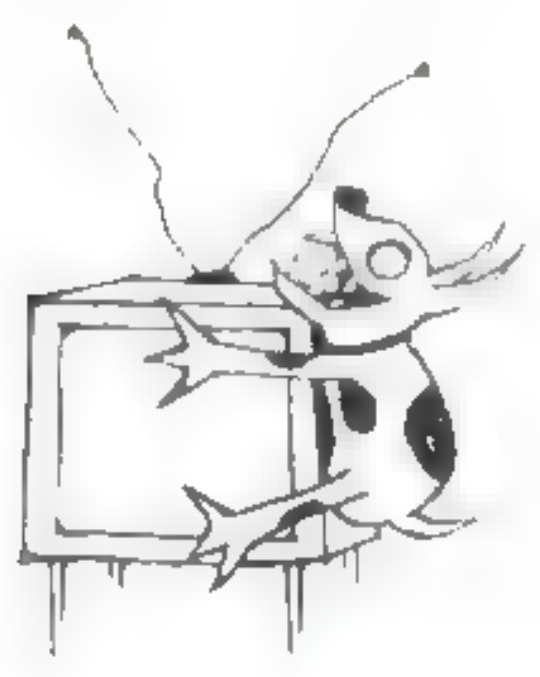
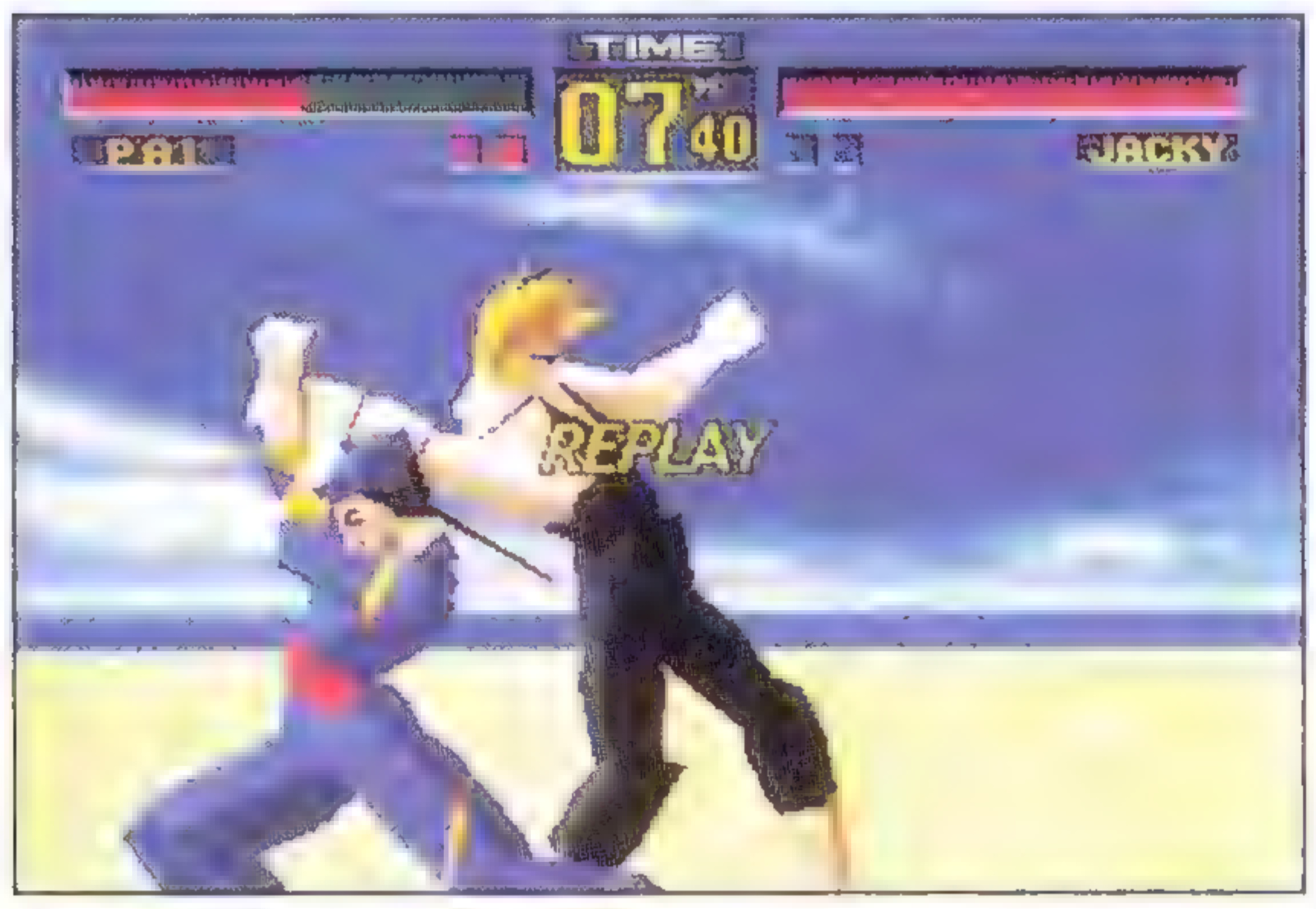
32X

VIRTUA FIGHTER

SYSTEM: 32X
MANUFACTURER: Sega
GRAPHIX: A
CONTROL: A
SOUND: A-
PASSWORD/SAVE: No
BUY/RENT/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: A



Stop the presses. It seems as if the demise of the 32X may be premature, as Sega scores big with an impressive conversion of the legendary *Virtua Fighter*. Finally, a convincing reason to buy the 32X!



First off, the gameplay is left completely intact from the arcade original. Secondly, Sega has succeeded in squeezing every possible bit of juice out of the 32X sound chips. While not CD-quality, the music and sound effects are easily the best that have been produced on the struggling system.

Incredibly, the game also features some new modes and options that aren't even available in the Saturn version. The best new feature is the Tournament Mode which allows up to eight fighters to do battle in head-to-head combat for the title of Ultimate Fighter. Other new options include the ability to adjust the ring size, camera views, and the characters' uniform colors.

The strength of *VF* has always been superior gameplay, and their is no letdown here. All of the moves are included, and the gameplay is as smooth as ever. Quite amazingly, there is no reduction in game speed that one would almost believe to be a given on a title of this magnitude for the 32X. While the characters suffer from a slight lack of the sharpness found on the Saturn, the colors are vibrant and the animation is silky smooth. Perhaps the most incredible achievement is the noticeable improvement of the polygon dropout that plagued the Saturn version. It's extras such as these that add spice to a game that in most respects has been around for awhile. *Virtua Fighter* 32X is by far, the best title the platform has seen yet, and finally gives gamers a reason to purchase the system.

—ANTHONY LYNCH

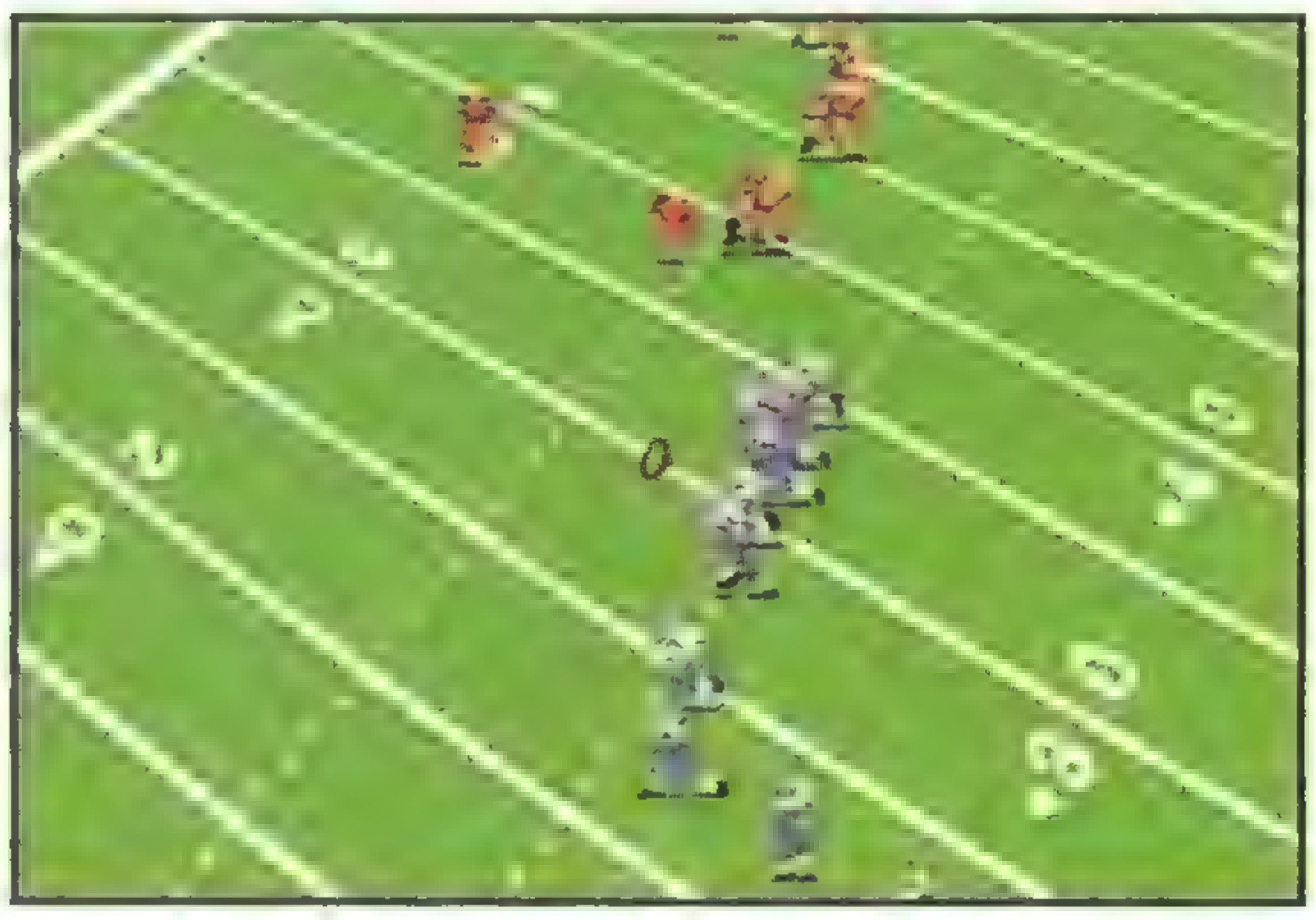
SNES

EMMITT SMITH FOOTBALL

SYSTEM: SNES
MANUFACTURER: JVC
GRAPHIX: B+
CONTROL: B+
SOUND: B+
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: B+

Emmitt Smith Football from JVC brings one of the game's great athletes to the world of SNES football. On first glance, gamers well-versed in 16-bit football carts will undoubtedly experience deja vu, as the players, the field, the play selection screens, the gameplay and even the options are almost exactly as they are in the early versions of EA's *Madden* series. Coincidentally, the game has no license, other than Mr. Smith, so the teams are represented only by their cities, and the players by their numbers—as they were in *Madden* 1 for the Genesis.

Two features new to 16-bit football have been added to this game to distinguish it from others on the market. First and foremost is the play editor, which allows gamers to create their own plays. Relive your own childhood plays with such favorites as "Kill The Quarterback," or "Everyone Go Deep," or be even more creative and use the simple menu-driven commands to create plays that will eat up a defense or crush all offensive dreams. The play editor allows you to run your play against other plays found in the game, this way you can dissect their weaknesses to the point of exploitation. This feature adds incredibly to the game's overall replay value. It gives all fans a chance to lead their own team with their own playbook.



Another new feature is the ability to rotate perspectives on the fly. This may be confusing at first, but some gamers may relish this ability. A sort of poor man's *FIFA* for the 3DO.

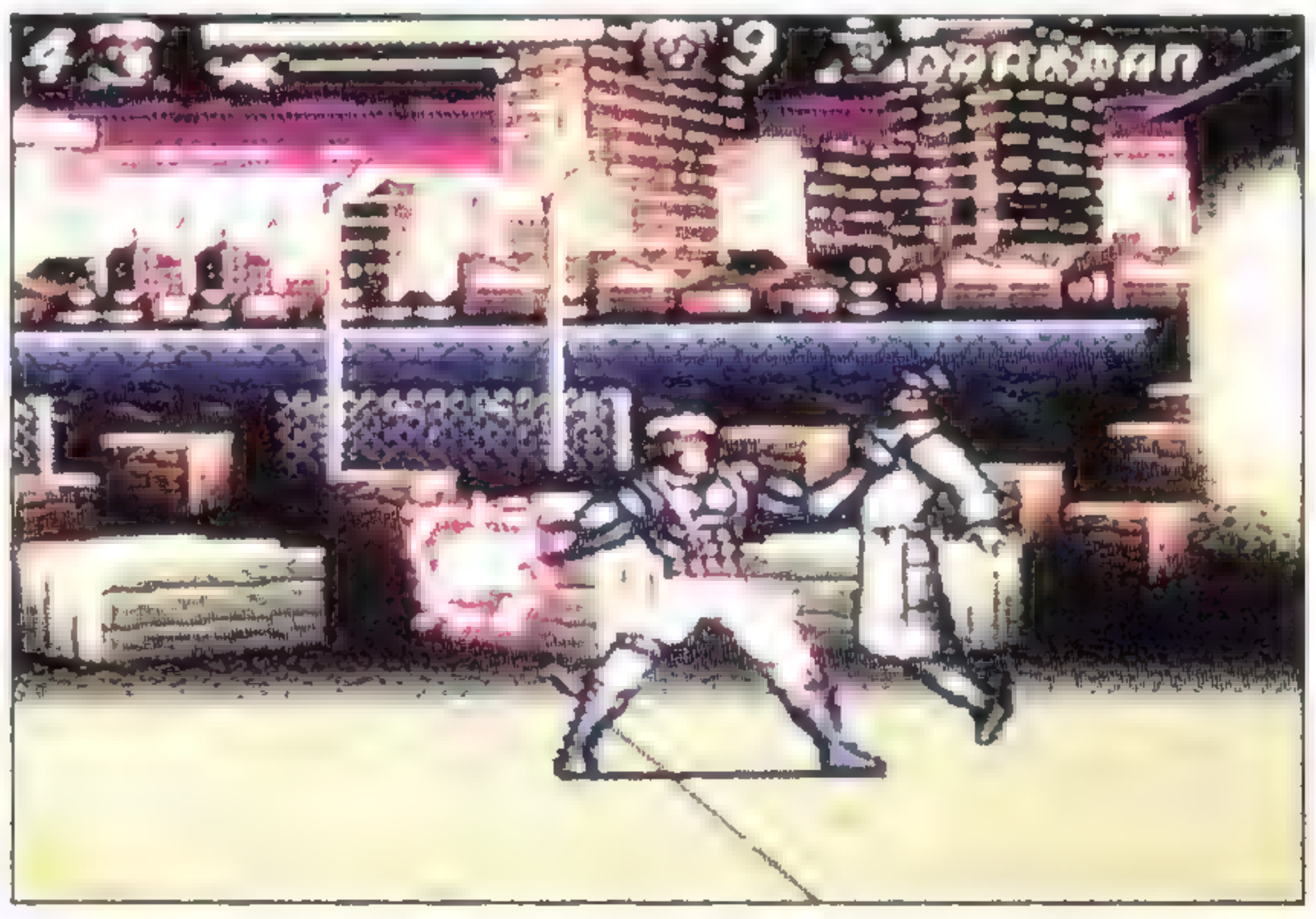
In short, *Emmitt Smith Football* is like a wedding: something old, something new, something borrowed, something (black and) blue. Hopefully future editions will have an NFL/NFLPA license, and stray more from the EA series, but for a first football effort, JVC should be commended.

—MATT LURIN

WILDC.A.T.S

SYSTEM: SNES
MANUFACTURER: Playmates Interactive
GRAPHIX: B+
CONTROL: C+
SOUND: B-
PASSWORD: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: B

Still waiting for the perfect comic book-to-video game translation? Well, hang in there because *WildC.A.T.s* isn't it. Still, it's a decent side-scrolling adventure that's a definite step up from the garbage heap of most recent comic book-oriented video games.



What you've got here is a one-player *Double Dragon* knock-off with a few interesting improvements, such as non-linear board select. The real strength of this game, however, are the little details that flow throughout: The board shakes when Maul walks, and when he punches someone out, he actually tosses them up in the air like a volleyball he's about to serve. The graphics are strong, too, with large characters that actually look the way they do in the comic.

The downfall of the game, though, is the control. Spartan, in particular, is very aggravating. Once he powers up his force beam, he can't turn or move and he's locked into a firing position. Then, even when you get the power-up to make the force beam stronger, firing it full strength at an enemy as fearsome as the "Biker" won't even take half their power away. This superhero is so tough he can't beat up a sweaty punk in leather and chains? What's more, Spartan can fly... but only in the cut scenes. So he's puny and lame. Not good for the leader of the team.

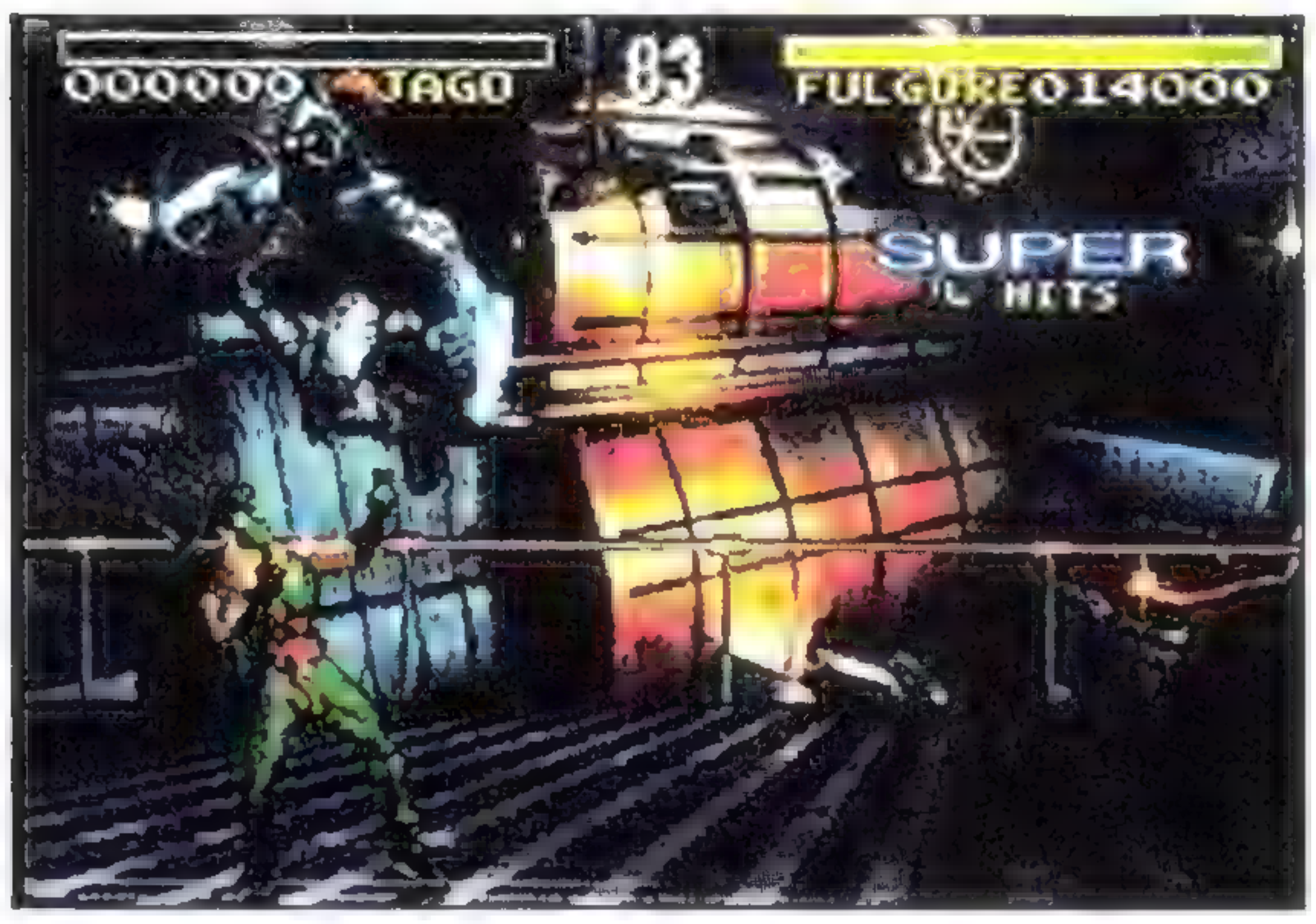
If you're a fan of the comic, this game is worth checking out. Even if you're not, but you like side-scrolling adventures, plan on renting it for an enjoyable night of smashing. But replay factor on this game will probably be low, despite the password feature. If you want a real feel for super powers, check out *Justice League Task Force*.

—HUGH STERBAKOV

KILLER INSTINCT

SYSTEM: SNES
MANUFACTURER: Nintendo
GRAPHIX: B
CONTROL: B
SOUND: B
PASSWORD/SAVE: No
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: C+

I'm not so sure that the 16-bit platform is on its way out, but *Killer Instinct* is a good indication that the digitized 2D-fighter is starting to pack its bags. Nintendo/Rareware have managed to squeeze 512 colors out of the SNES at one time, and that's pretty impressive—but the innovations stop there. Surprisingly, there just isn't anything to make *Killer Instinct* stand out. Now, *KI* isn't all bad; the characters—including a reanimated skeleton, a raptor with a thing for martial arts, and the obligatory stacked babe in tight green jumper—are still reasonably cool and they're right from the arcade, after all. The game mechanics are solid, and there's some nifty "combo theory" to be mastered...but all in all, I'll wait for cart versions of *Virtua Fighter*.



Nintendo must have known that the SNES version of *KI* wouldn't live up to gamers' arcade expectations, and that's probably why they include a "Killer Cuts" CD full of mostly repetitive, bonk-bonk video game music to distract us from what's going on, which ain't a whole hell of a lot.

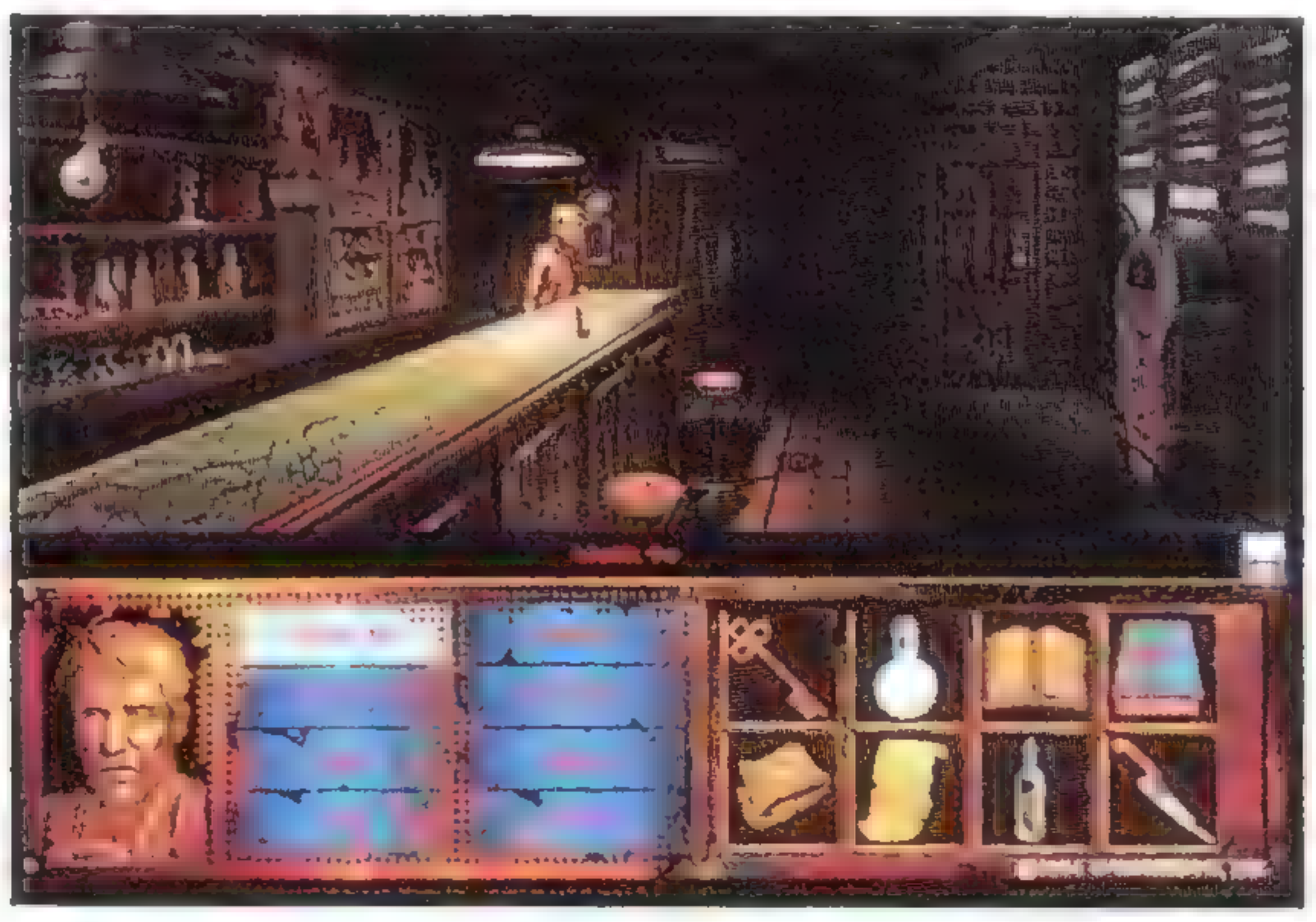
—CHRIS HUDAK

PLAYSTATION

I HAVE NO MOUTH, AND I MUST SCREAM

SYSTEM: Playstation/PC/Macintosh
MANUFACTURER: Cyberdreams Interactive
GRAPHIX: B
CONTROL: B-
SOUND: A
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: B

When gamers first heard rumors of this project, none of them believed it. Harlan Ellison—world-renowned controversial author, essayist, lecturer, social-cultural ass-kicker, and the man who still writes world-class fantasy on a manual typewriter with two fingers—has collaborated with Cyberdreams Interactive on a new, disturbing and controversial game: *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream*.



Based on his short story of the same title (one of the *ten most reprinted stories* in the English language), the game chronicles the nightmarish lives of the last five people on Earth, trapped in the subterranean belly of an insane supercomputer whose hatred for humanity is so great that it intends to keep the five alive in a never-ending hell. Combining top-notch 3D animation, digitized speech (Ellison's voice as AM, the demented computer), storylines which delve into the inner secrets of these five damned souls, and provocative psychological and ethical dilemmas confronting such issues as courage, friendship, insanity, rape and sacrifice, *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream* is surely going to rattle some cages.

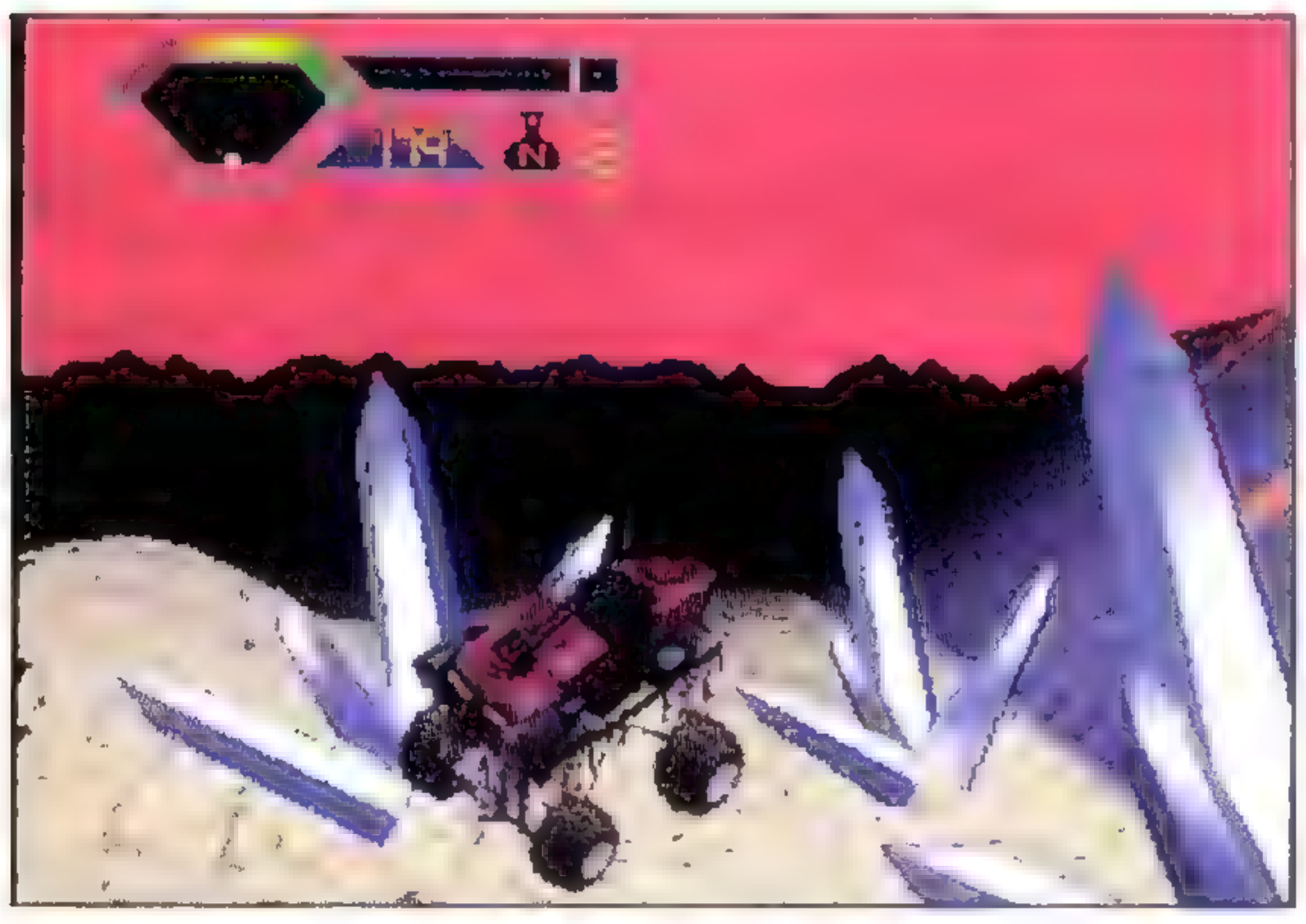
—CHRIS HUDAK

"SHE'S
PERFECT.
SHE'S GOT AN
ATHLETIC BUILD
LOVELY
LONG NAILS
EXOTIC EYES
NIMBLE
REFLEXES AND..."

OFF-WORLD INTERCEPTOR EXTREME

SYSTEM: PlayStation
MANUFACTURER: Crystal Dynamics
GRAPHIX: B+
SOUND: B
CONTROL: B
SAVE/PASSWORD: No
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: B

Off-World Interceptor Extreme should have been an amazing game. When you pop this sucker into your PlayStation, the first thing you see is an incredible Crystal Dynamics marquee. Then, cycle through the options to pick "story" and you'll get a first-person video cutscene in which you're briefed by commanding officers. Real video on a home gaming system. Amazing.



But then this kinda disappointing thing happens... you start the game.

In this off-road racing game, you'll drive furiously through various terrain while dodging missiles, avoiding strange obstacles and escaping enemy buggies. You go from planet to planet, overcoming a series of levels until you meet the boss, an escaped convict in a tank of some sort. Destroy him and move on to the next world while earning loads of cash to buy new cars and more weapons.

But the cars aren't improvements and the weapons aren't all that new. All the cars cost the same amount, and no one seems better than any of the others anyway. You can't buy new, better weapons, just more of the same old ones. You start out with plenty of cash to buy them, then collect more during the race. In fact, it feels like 90% of this game is spent driving into coin icons.

The controls are a bit awkward. Of the eight buttons on the PSX controller, seven have operations during the game. Good luck remembering which is Nitro and which is AirStrike in the middle of a race.

But then again, maybe you won't have so much of a problem, because the race doesn't demand much. No turns, no boundaries. You just keep driving forward, shooting the whole time. The head-to-head mode is the only feature with any replayability. Competing against a friend on this terrain can be exciting...at least for a little while.

Interestingly enough, if you sit through the demo of *OWIE* long enough, you'll come to a cool, long video bit for Crystal Dynamics' other PSX games. In fact, it's so crisp, you start to wonder where they spent all their energy, and realize what most of the data on the CD really is: the commercial.

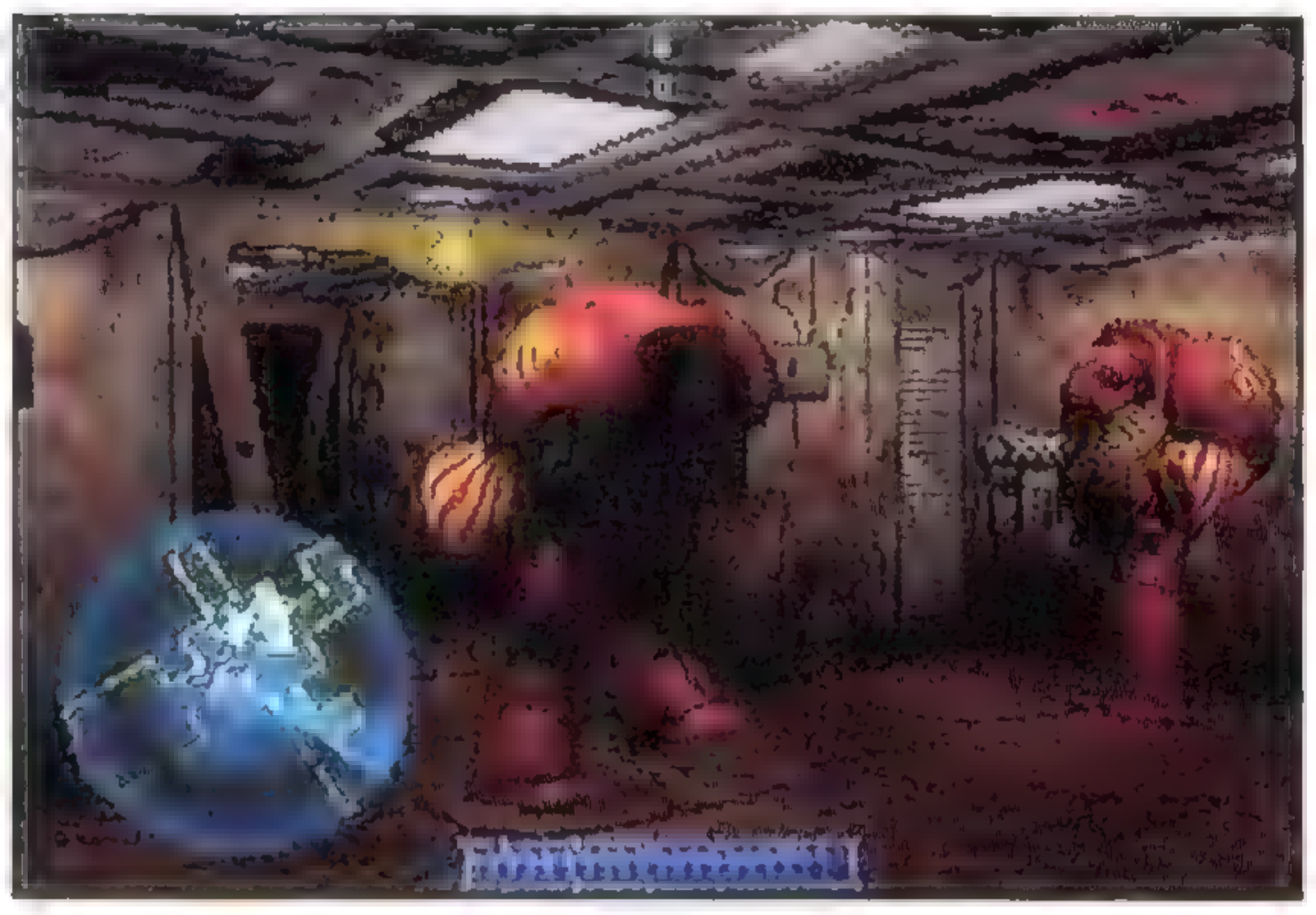
—HUGH STERBAKOV

3DO

SPACE HULK

SYSTEM: 3DO
MANUFACTURER: Electronic Arts
GRAPHIX: B
CONTROL: B
SOUND: A-
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: A

There's nothing like watching bodies drop in the frantic, blood gushing, maze chases of *DOOM*, but it wasn't long after *DOOM*'s incredible success that quick buck artists worldwide hacked together plenty of cheesy *DOOM* rip-offs, severely overcrowding the new genre of 3D games. Thankfully, EA has decided to inject some depth into the genre with one of this year's best games, *Space Hulk* for the 3DO.



Space Hulk takes place in the Warhammer 40,000 universe with a Gothic, middle-ages atmosphere hurled far into the 41st century. Man's desire to explore space has resulted in a large-scale war with many different alien races. You command members of the Blood Angels, a respected team of genetically engineered Space Marines, who stop at nothing to splatter alien guts across the universe.

While *Space Hulk* shares the same graphical style as *DOOM*, it's far from a shallow blast-fest. Instead, each level begins with several Blood Angels, and they must be commanded as a team to accomplish each mission. It requires some serious decision making and organized strategy to make it out alive. With the stiff difficulty and tons of available missions (there's a campaign mode and multitudes of single levels), *Space Hulk* is no pushover.

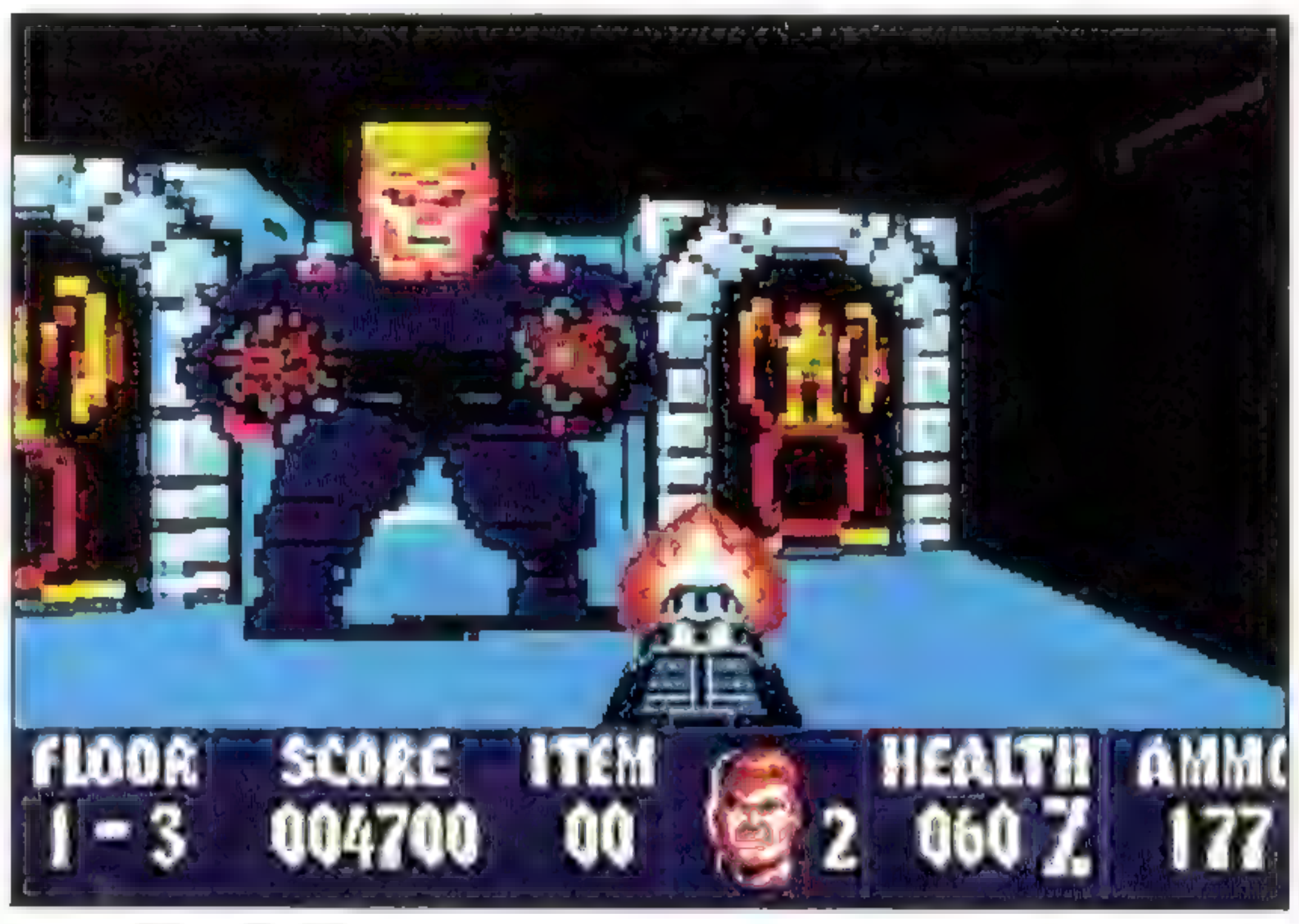
Be prepared to kill lots of time. The atmosphere sucks you into the game, and the challenge will keep you there. While the frame rate may be a little low, and the controls initially confusing, *Space Hulk* has made it onto 1995's extremely short list of great games.

—RALPH BARBAGALLO

WOLFENSTEIN 3D

SYSTEM: 3DO
MANUFACTURER: Interplay
GRAPHIX: B
SOUND: B+
CONTROL: B
PASSWORD/SAVE: Save
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: B

Wolfenstein 3d for the 3DO is an excellent translation of the groundbreaking PC shooter that, in some ways, even surpasses the original. With higher resolution graphics, the addition of a new music score and CD quality sound, this "remix" is nothing short of mindless, addictive, blood-splattering fun.



Set in WW II Nazi Germany, William J. "B.J." Blazkowicz is the bad-ass spy sent by the Allies in their attempt to stop the scourge of the Nazis. There are seven different episodes to select from including the Original Encounter—with 30 additional levels. Each episode is a mission. Whether it's escaping from the Nazi prison, Castle Wolfenstein, to assassinating the Furher, each maze-like level is filled with treasure, weapons, medkits, secret passages and of course, the heavily armed guards. Outfitted at the start with only a knife and a pistol, the machine gun and chain gun can be acquired by killing the guards equipped with such weaponry or finding the secret room that houses them. If you like your Nazis crispy-fried or their appendages blown from their bodies, there are two new weapons—a flamethrower and a bazooka—that are hidden and awaiting use.

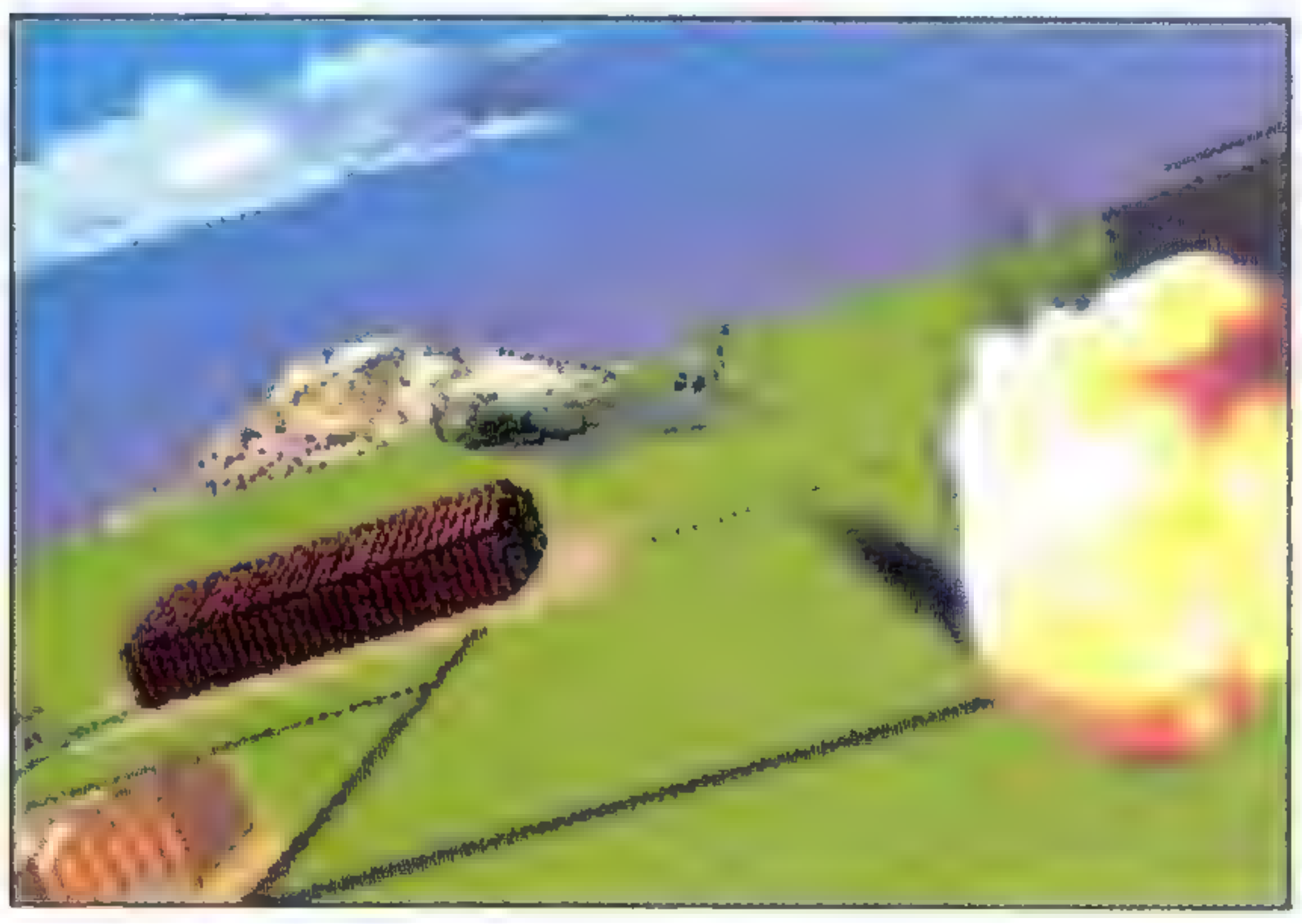
With the increased resolution, there's very little pixelation, even when the objects are up close. And the orchestral score provides an excellent accompaniment to the tension and excitement of the game. One complaint would be the voices of the dying guards; a generic scream is used instead of the various German expletives found in the PC original. Overall, *Wolfenstein 3d* is an enjoyable bout of blood-spilling violence; but as a 32-bit game, the expectations are higher. Although it may be fun blowing away Nazis, this genre of first-person action shooters has been done to death, though largely due to the success of this game. Trust me, the thrill of trying to conquer 90 levels of any game begins to wear thin after awhile.

—LIN LENG

FLYING NIGHTMARES

SYSTEM: 3DO
MANUFACTURER: Domark
GRAPHICS: C
CONTROL: C
SOUND: C
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Rent
OVERALL: C

Ever since the days of *Flight Simulator II* and *Jet* on my C64, I've been a casual fan of flight sims. I don't look for super-realism in a flight sim, or any specific planes. Instead, I'm into having lots of scenery to buzz and enemies to fight. Which is probably why Domark's *Flying Nightmares* doesn't appeal to my tastes.



Flying Nightmares focuses on the AV8B Harrier Jump Jet. This aircraft packs some serious heat, and has the unique feature of vectored thrust. The AV8B can hover like a helicopter for vertical takeoffs and landings, and also perform great maneuvers in dogfights by directing the thrust for short stops.

Each mission takes the AV8B through the flat, sparse terrain of the fictional Asian

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TEEN
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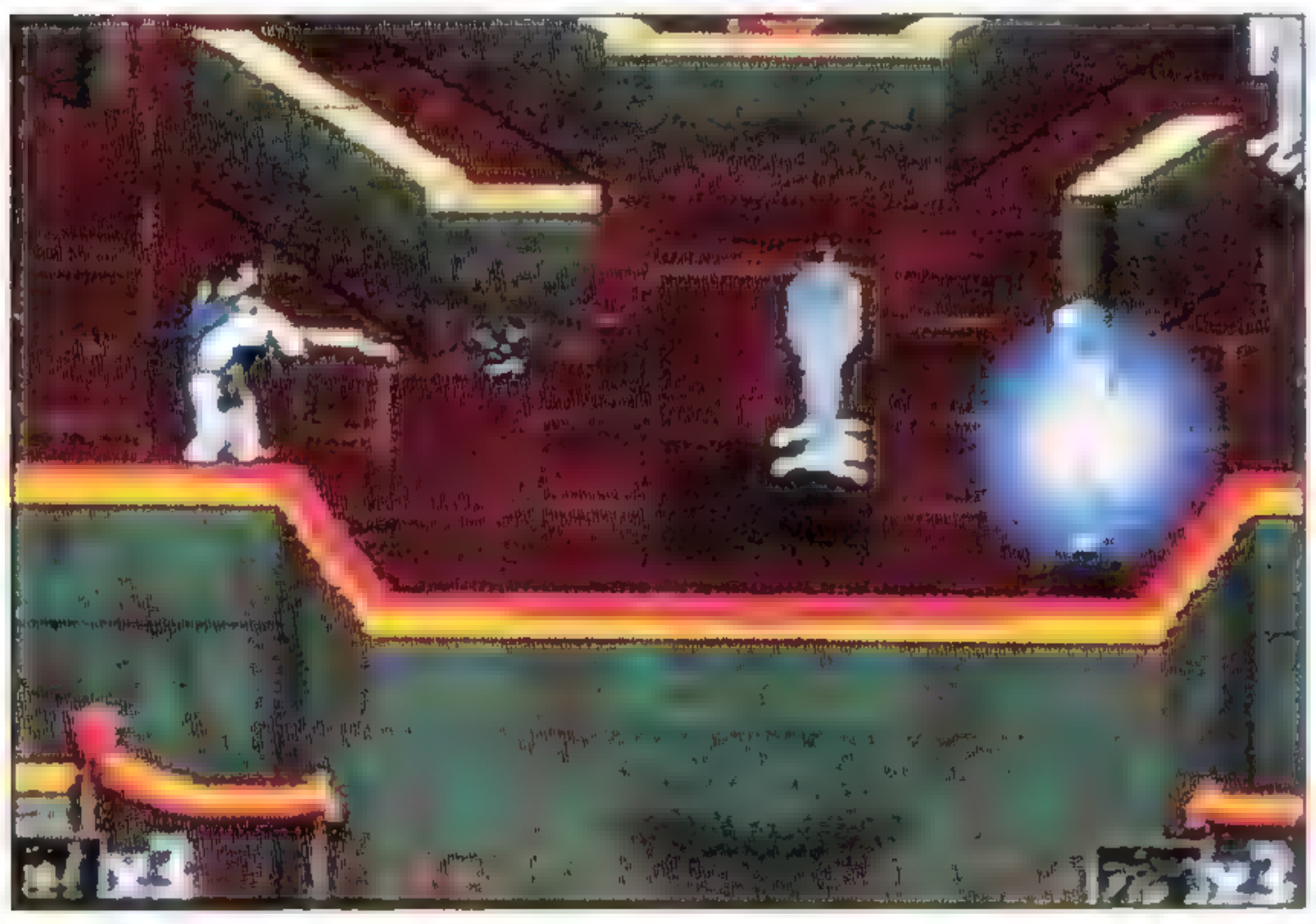
country, Barcala. There are a few mountains here and there, and patches of texture every once in awhile, but in general, Barcala is very bland and very green. While there are plenty of enemy threats in the air and on the ground, the main challenge seems actually controlling the AV8B. The button combinations make it nearly impossible to do something as simple as shooting and turning simultaneously.

I suppose for flight sim nuts, *Flying Nightmares* ain't so bad. It has a challenging campaign with lots of missions, and it's one of the few flight simulations on the 3DO. But for anyone outside of that audience, it's a hard sell.
—RALPH BARBAGALLO

MAZER

SYSTEM: 3DO
MANUFACTURER: American Laser Games
GRAPHIX: C
CONTROL: D
SOUND: C
PASSWORD/SAVE: No
BUY/BORROW/PASS: Pass
OVERALL: D

American Laser Games' latest brick in the wall of video game decadence is *Mazer*; a pallid attempt at a 2-player arcade shooter. *Mazer* can best be described as a combination between *Smash TV* and *Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters* with none of the charm or fun of either.



The standard sci-fi plot applies in *Mazer*; a generic alien menace has invaded Earth, and it's up to a squad of generic video game heroes to free the planet. Each level in *Mazer* is a tiny claustrophobic isometric arena in which you have to rescue hostages, blast spontaneously generating robots and destroy an energy tower to encounter the boss robot. Once the boss has been destroyed, it's off to the next level in a long series of repetitive stages.

Graphically, *Mazer* uses an uneven mix of digitized characters and 3D pre-rendered objects with a bit of scaling thrown in and gratuitous full-motion video (an ALG staple). The effect is none too impressive. The audio consists of the standard array of blasts and grunts, along with some sort of droning industrial-techno soundtrack.

The control is awful. The various button combinations for shooting secondary weapons, executing special moves, and locking the firing position don't seem to work all the time. And the characters will often get stuck against walls in some of the more irregularly shaped arenas.

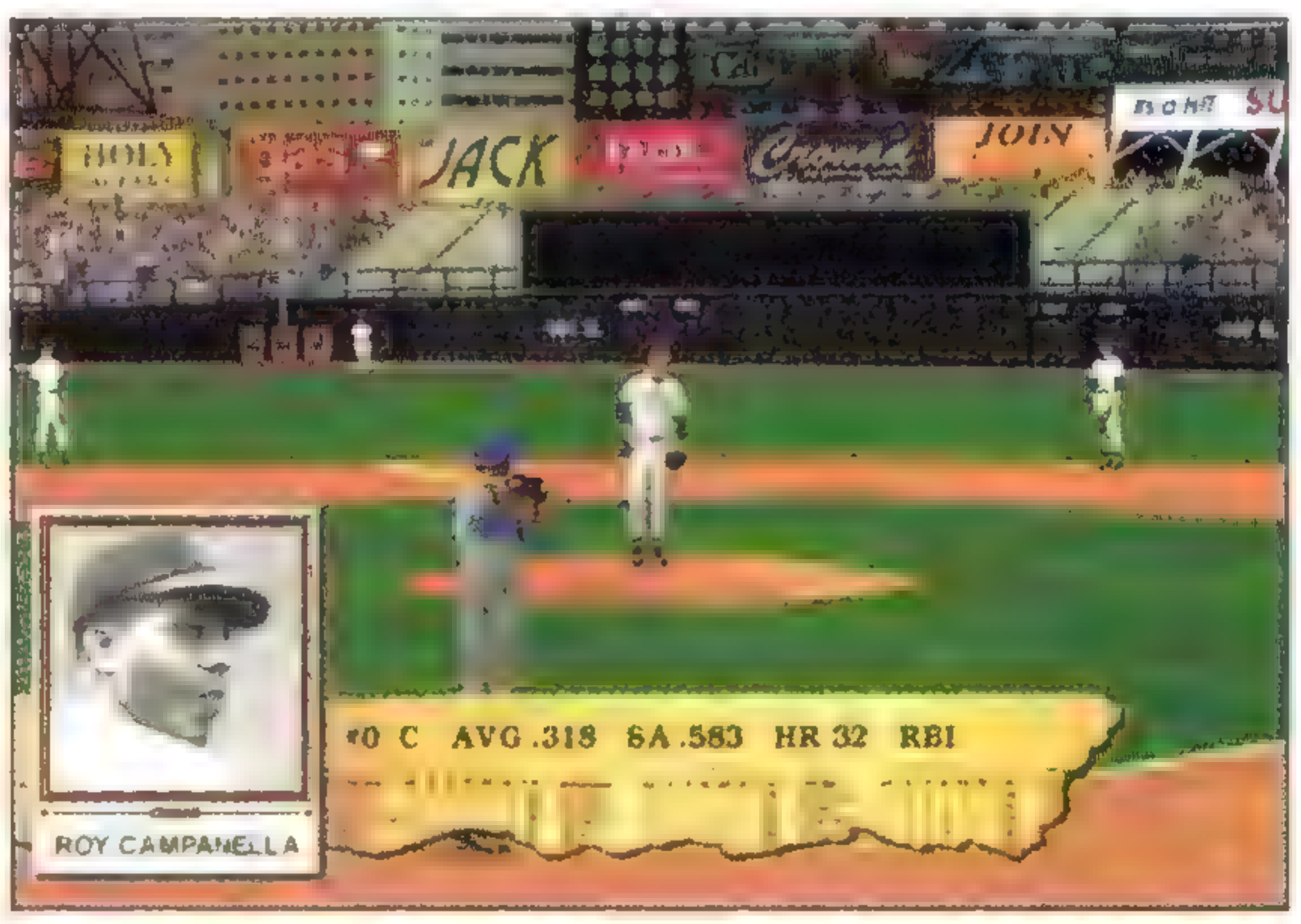
The two player mode is only mildly entertaining because it's more fun to laugh at a bad game with a friend than alone. Avoid. **—RALPH BARBAGALLO**

PC CD-ROM

OLD TIME BASEBALL

SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM
MANUFACTURER: Electronic Arts
GRAPHIX: A
CONTROL: B
SOUND: A
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/BORROW/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: B+

Impressed with the latest in CD-ROM technology? Think *Panzer Dragoon* kicks ass? Dazed by the amount of detail in *Dark Forces*? Well, they've been topped. Check out *Old Time Baseball*, with all the statistics of a measly 12,000 players from just 110 years of baseball history.



Every player.
Every team.
From 1871 to 1981. Someone have a little too much time on their hands? I think so.

There are also 16, 3-D modeled, old-time stadiums, recreated right down to the billboards in the outfield and hundreds of player portraits realistically displayed next to their statistics when they come up to bat. Oh, and your choice of two Hall Of Fame announcers, Curt Gowdy or Mel Allen, to call the plays.

The most intriguing element to this game, however, is the "time machine," which allows you to transport players from different eras. Ever wonder how the '27 Yankees would perform in the dead ball era? Or the modern era? Wanna see the 1980 Phillies against the 1919 "Black" Sox? *Old Time Baseball* will account for the change and alter the probabilities. Wanna take it a step further? You can create your own team and even import stadiums, players and leagues from EA's *Tony LaRussa Baseball 3*.

All these overwhelming statistics, sadly enough, are wrapped around a mediocre baseball video game. Although the graphics are stunning, gameplay is S-L-O-W and the controls can be awkward. And, after awhile (but long before a nine inning game ends), you'll become tired of watching the same shot of pitcher and batter (the same graphics are used for every team, only uniform and skin color change).

If these statistics and graphics could be melded with a game like *Bases Loaded*, you'd have the best baseball game ever. This is closer to *MicroLeague Baseball* on steroids, strong on statistics and realism, but slow on action and gameplay.
—HUGH STERBAKOV

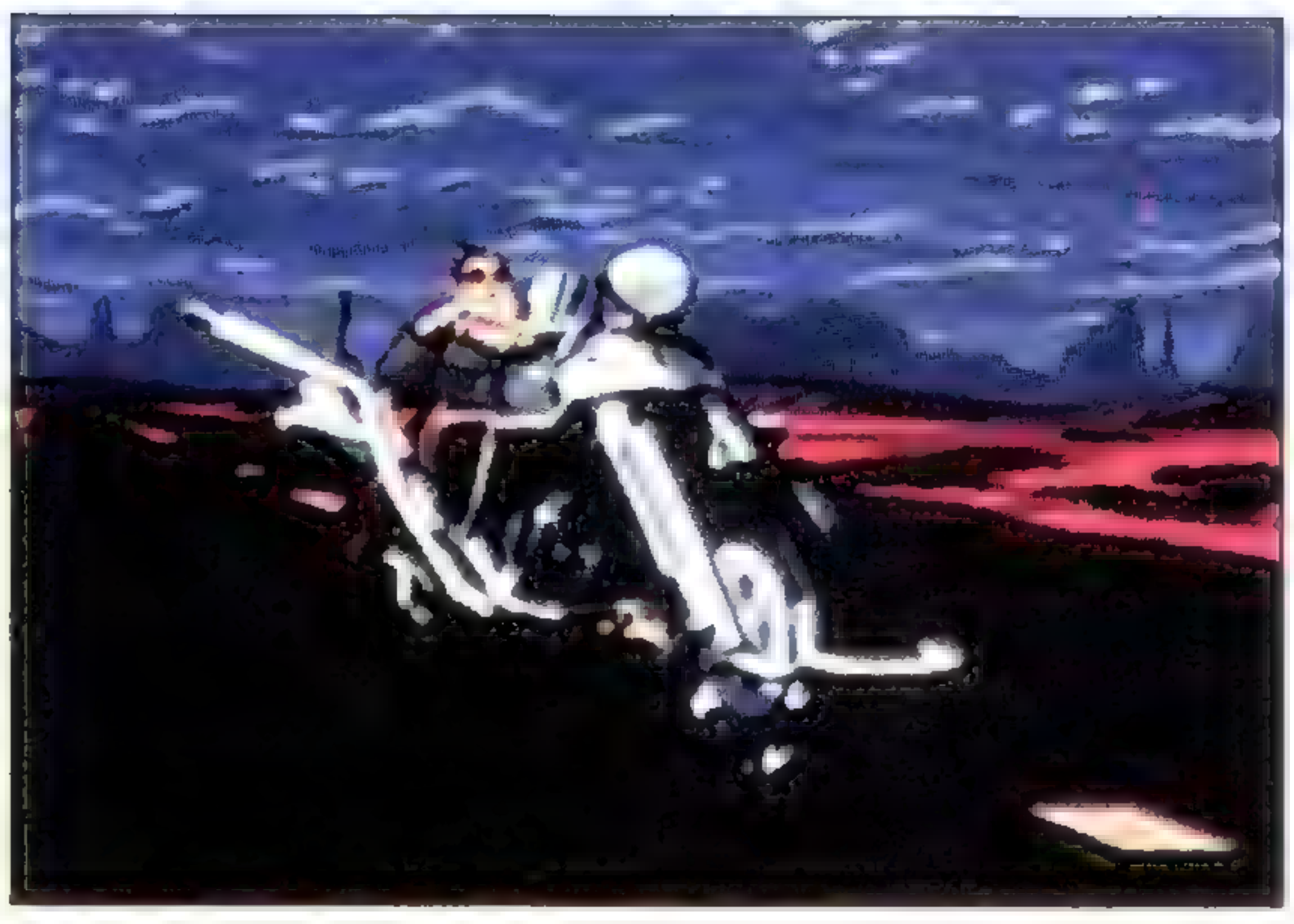
MACINTOSH

FULL THROTTLE

SYSTEM: Mac/PC
MANUFACTURER: LucasArts
GRAPHIX: A
CONTROL: A
SOUND: A
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/BORROW/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: A

Wait! Wait! I know you're using your copies of *Night Trap*, *Double Switch*, *Paparazzi!* and all the rest as coasters, and I know you've just about given up on the "cinematic" game as a whole—but check out *Full Throttle* because it rocks. Literally. Fueled by a kick-butt rock soundtrack by the Gone Jackals, this game's animated movie-style storyline tells the tale of a *Mad Max*-ish near future, where renegade biker Ben and his gang, the Polecats, have been framed for the murder of Malcolm Corley, the last maker of motorcycles in the U.S.

From the opening credits to arcade-style challenges (bike-to-bike combat, a demolition derby) to the final hairy scenes, *Full Throttle* is completely cinematic and yet fully animated, so you never have to touch one crappy quarter-screen FMV sequence. The sound—including the voice of Mark Hamill as the sleazy corporate slug Adrian Ripburger—



is terrific, the dialogue dry and humorous and the overall experience rewarding. Play this game if only to restore your faith in the movie-style game.

—CHRIS HUDAK

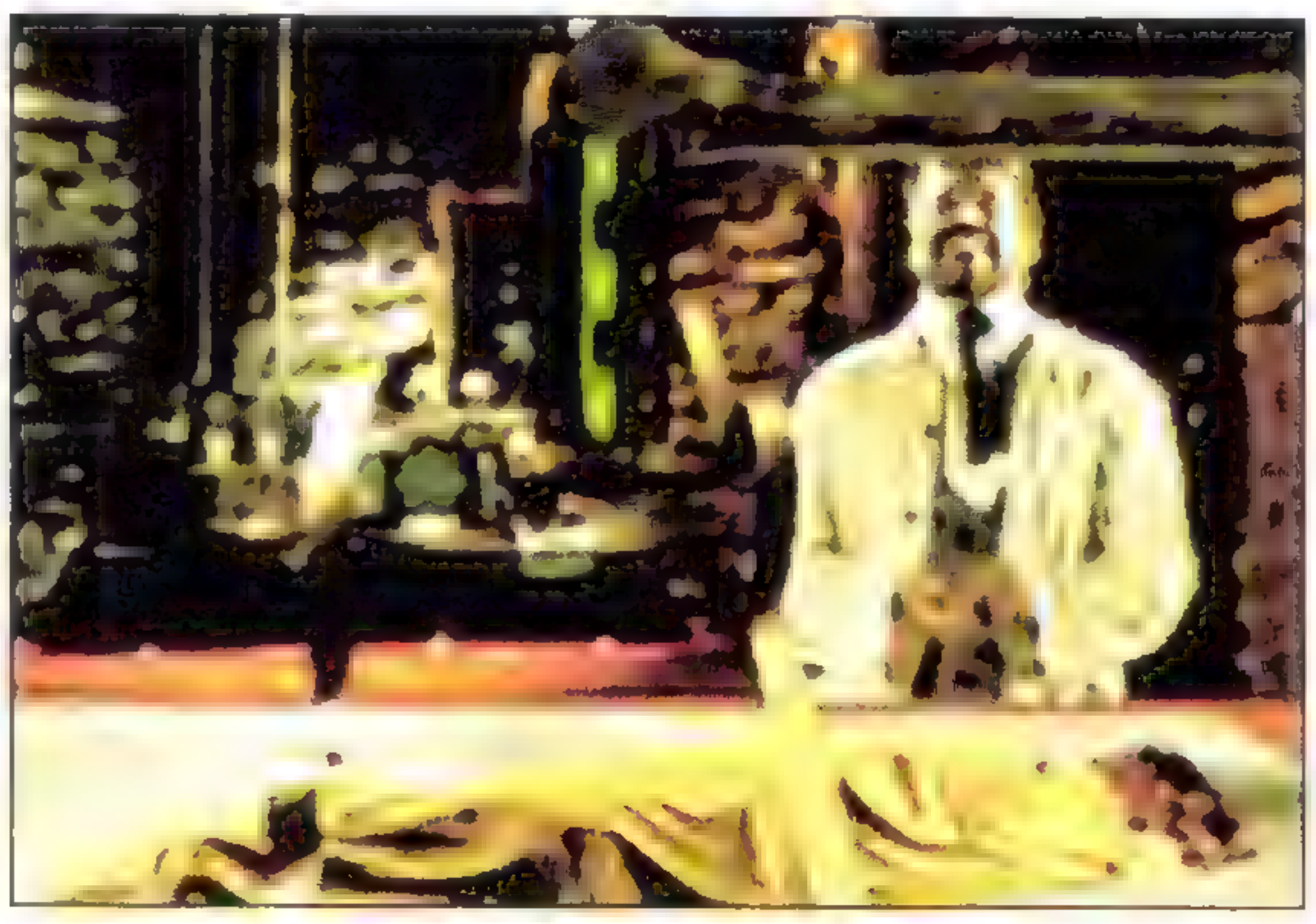
FRANKENSTEIN: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE MONSTER

SYSTEM: Macintosh
MANUFACTURER: Interplay
GRAPHIX: A
CONTROL: B
SOUND: A
PASSWORD/SAVE: Yes
BUY/RENT/PASS: Buy
OVERALL: B

The interesting thing about the classic tale of Frankenstein is how many people still have it wrong. Frankenstein was the doctor, not the monster, and the monster was actually a learned, sensitive being, not the arthritic mass of brain-death he's usually portrayed as. Well, Interplay have finally settled *that* score at least with this good-looking, good-intentioned take on the great story.

In the game, you are the monster, waking up on the table and realizing that A) you should be dead, B) you're not, and C) your reanimator is the mad egomaniacal scientist, Dr. Frankenstein (played by Tim Curry, whom you will almost instantly want to punch in the mouth—so he must be doing his job). A photorealistic beauty in the manner of *Myst* but darker, this game has you wandering the bleak laboratory, searching for clues to the mystery of your own death and inexplicable revival. The sound and video quality here are about as good as they come right now, there are some challenging puzzles, at least one nasty shock I can attest to, and most of all, a plot much closer to Mary Shelley's original story than *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein*.

—CHRIS HUDAK



DON'T EVER DO THIS

Never take a sheet of Saran Wrap (or similar plastic wrap) and stretch it over the basin of a toilet bowl (underneath the seat). Unsuspecting bathroom-goers who don't see the plastic will make one helluva mess.

Butch
"Yee-haw! I'm a killin' machine, AND I LIKE IT!!!"
— Game Players
When I find F.J.B. I'm gonna dress him up in a hideous day-glow mini-skirt, paint his toes violet, and call him "Dolly." Then I'll waste him.
Zoom In & Out Of Action
Features Music of *Pop Will Eat Itself*
What Good Is A Sony® Playstation™ If It Isn't
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SUPER WEAPON: Explosive Ring
KILLER TIP: Fights best against the ropes. Back into a corner and mow 'em down.
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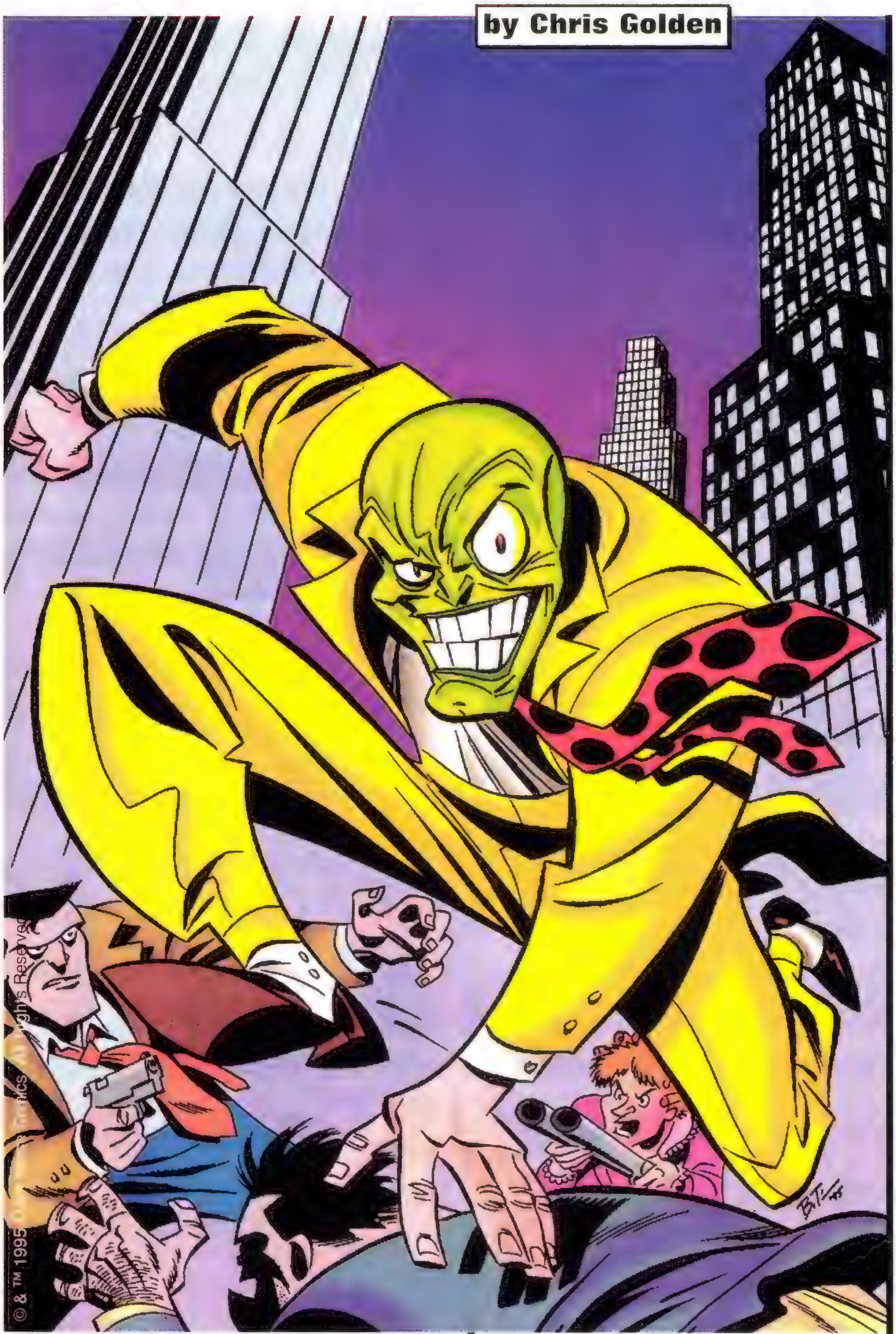
COMIX REVIEWS

by Chris Golden



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ADVENTURES OF THE MASK #1

Dark Horse
Written by Michael Eury, illustrated by Vokes, Geldof & Webb

Like every other company with an animated series, Dark Horse is introducing a non-continuity series based solely on a cartoon. Though all the best parts of the movie were in the trailer, this *Mask* comic is fun in a Tex Avery kind of way that doesn't require Jim Carrey. The presence of Walter, the mute monster from the regular series, is a pleasant surprise. If you're a big *Mask* fan, or you enjoy the other cartoon adaptations, you'll probably like this series. Otherwise, stick to the original.

RATING: 6.5

ALISTER THE SLAYER #1

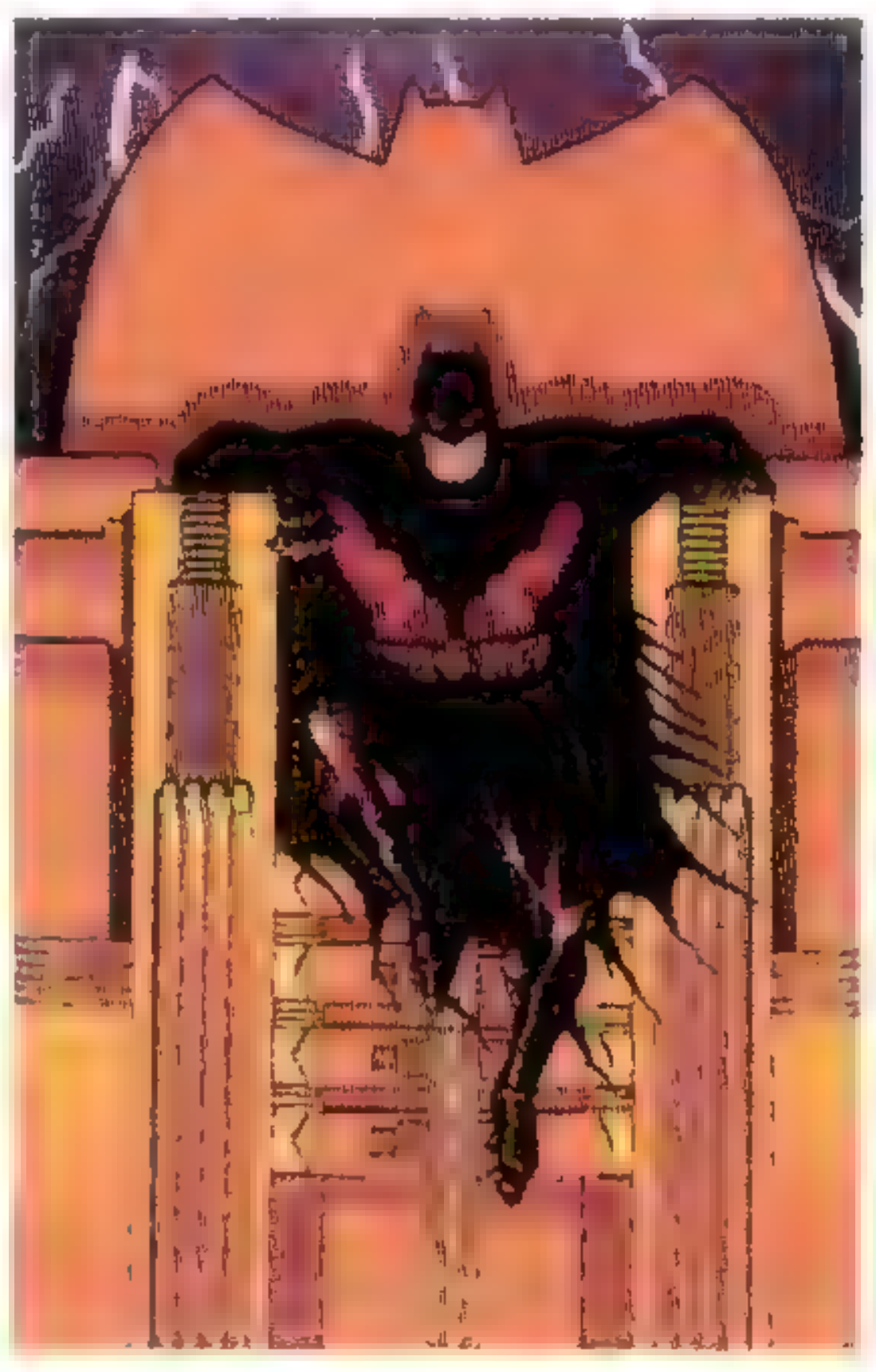
Midnight Press
Written by Trey Berryman, illustrated by Craig Robinson

Babes, warring vampire clans, immortal heroes, a cover by Boris and pretty decent writing: it's safe to say this comic has it all. The art is a sort of mutant Manga style that is not particularly impressive, but at least it doesn't detract from the story. The lettering, however, is amateurish enough to be distracting. But gripes aside, vampire fans will likely enjoy this book.

RATING: 5.5

BATMAN: DARK ALLEGIANCES

DC
Written and illustrated by Howard Chaykin



© & TM 1995 DC Comics.

This *Elseworlds* story places a decidedly different Batman in America, 1936. The world is changing, moving inexorably toward war. Everybody has a secret, including Bruce Wayne. He's fallen into a web that includes a sultry starlet, a KKK-like group called the White Legion, a crooked Senator, and much more. This is a far more cynical Bruce Wayne, in a story that's perfect for Chaykin's talents. Known for his portrayal of characters who are, at the very least, jaded, Chaykin really shines here as both writer and artist.

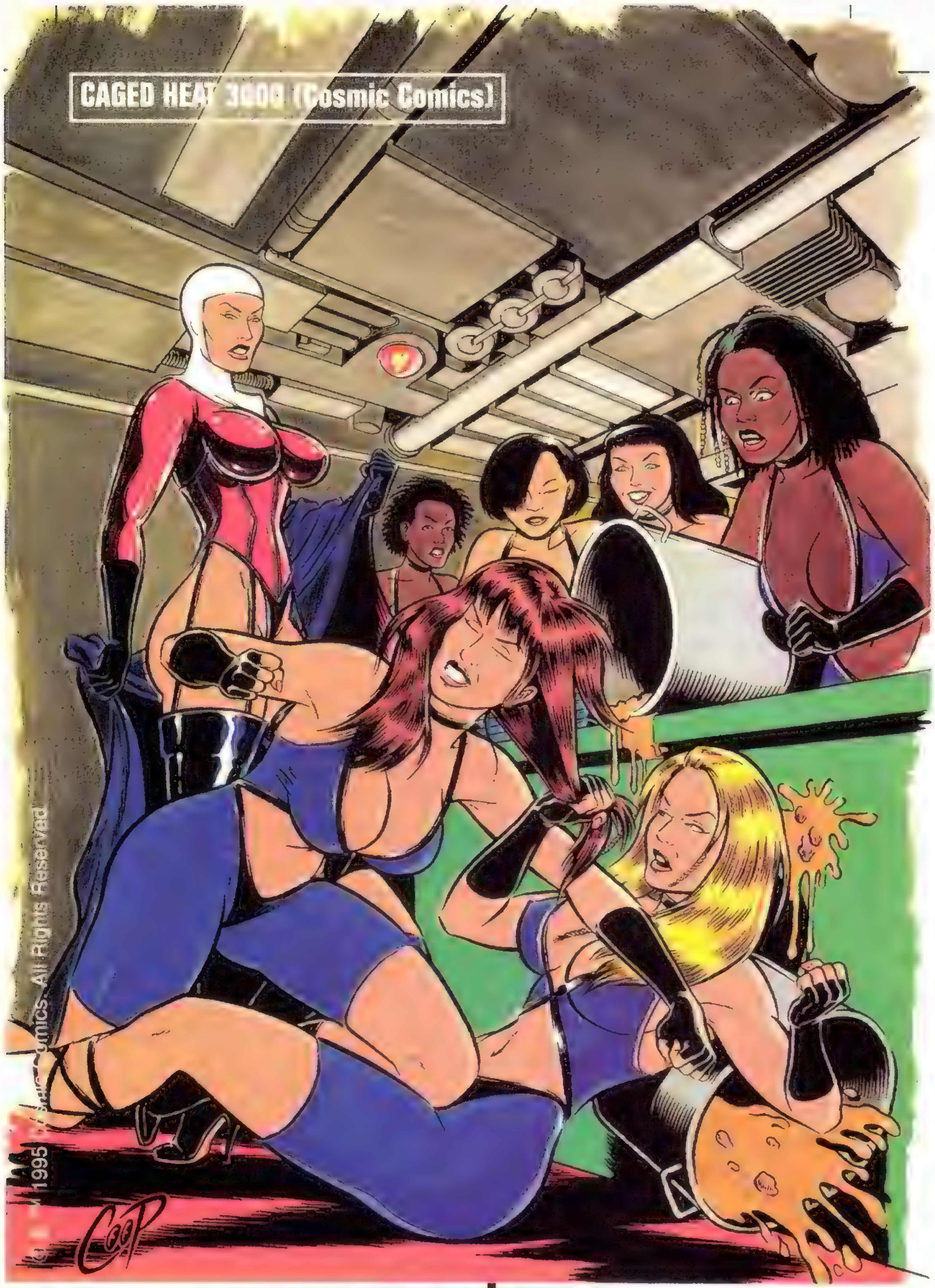
RATING: 8.5

BUTTON MAN

Kitchen Sink Press
Written by John Wagner and illustrated by Arthur Ransom

In England, wealthy socialites play the most dangerous game of all...from a distance. Each hires a mercenary, a "button man," to be a modern gladiator. Harry Exton is dragged into the

killing game against his will, but doesn't mind at first. When he wants to quit being a button man, he learns that there's no way out but death. In every way, this story is perfect.
RATING: 10


CAGED HEAT 3000 (Cosmic Comics)

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CAGED HEAT 3000 #1

Cosmic Comics
Written by Jerry Prosser, penciled by Matt Thompson, inked by Dan Schaeffer
Filmmaker Roger Corman pretty much defined the film genre of babes behind bars. Here, his comics company throws science-fiction into the mix with an adaptation of the new straight-to-video film of the same name. Though the comic lacks the copious nudity of the film, that doesn't mean it isn't titillating. The lesbian implications alone will do most readers a world of good. It's simple: babes behind bars in space in the year 3000, shower scenes and a sadistic female "confessor" with enormous breasts. Now comes the surprise: beyond the obvious attraction of the book, it is very well executed. The art is hot, and Prosser's script is likely better than the movie's.
RATING: 6.5

DOC SAMSON #1 & #2

Marvel
Written by Dan Slott, penciled by Ken Lashley and inked by Tom Wegryzn
So far, this miniseries isn't nearly as bad as it should be. Doc Samson is interesting as a supporting character, but he has never had the spark that is required of a "leading man." He still doesn't. Nevertheless, the creative team carries this thing off remarkably well. Slott is clearly having fun here, and has wisely included cameos by the Hulk and Polaris, as well as a recurring role for She-Hulk. Lashley is one of Marvel's unsung heroes. It really is good stuff, but at the end of the day, it's still Doc Samson.
RATING: 7

FATHER & SON #1

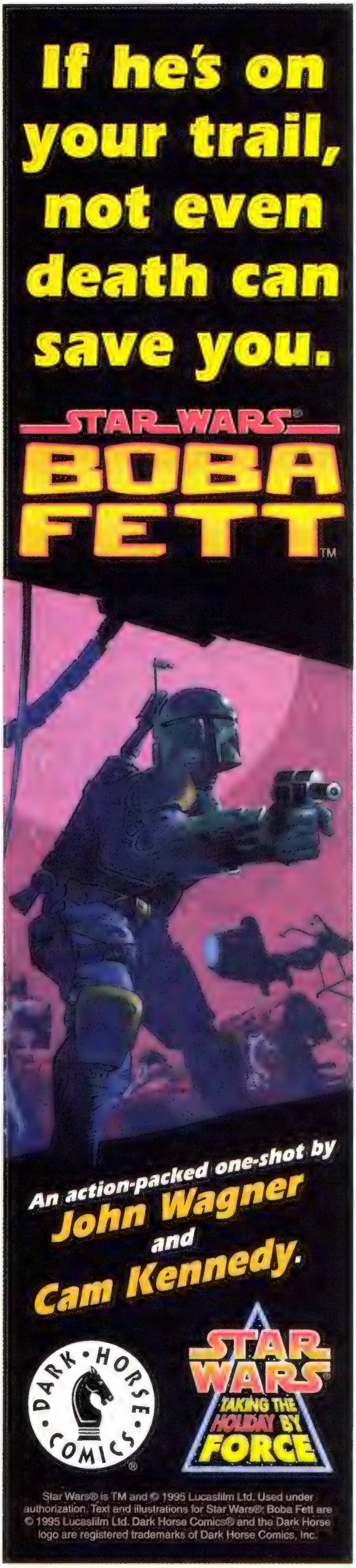
Kitchen Sink Press
Written and illustrated by Jeff Nicholson
This is classic stuff. A Gen-X slacker who thinks the Seventies were way cool still lives at home with his Donald Trump-worshipping father. "Seventies dudes were ahead of their time," the kid tells Dad. "Remember Shaggy on *Scooby Doo*?" It's one strip after another detailing the new Generation Gap between Boomers and Xers. If you're not too lazy to get up off the couch, go buy yourself a copy.
RATING: 8

FLOWERS ON THE RAZOR WIRE: THE FALL

Boneyard Press
Written by William Harms, illustrated by Albert Holaso.
It is becoming exceedingly difficult to tell a good and original vampire story these days. If you don't put your own spin on the "rules," the lore of vampirism, you've already got one strike against you. So does this story. But it takes three strikes to make an out. Instead, "The Fall" scores. The story features renegade vampire factions warring under the streets of New York, and two Catholic priests who react very differently to the promise of eternal life as vampires. For those interested in vampires, or horror in general, "The Fall" is worth the price of admission.
RATING: 6.5

GREEN ARROW #104

DC Comics
Written by Chuck Dixon, penciled by Rodolfo Dimaggio, inked by Robert Campanella
If this was any hero but Green Arrow, its review would be much better. The writing and art are fine, and the issue is helped by an appearance by the new Green Lantern. But GL's appearance only helps to focus on the problems of this book. No matter what Hal Jordan did as Green Lantern, he was still a superhero. Oliver Queen was a curmudgeon way past his mid-life crisis. He was an angry man, pissed off at what his city had become, and at the system that allowed it. In the *Longbow Hunters* miniseries, and the first forty odd issues of the monthly, he was the most "human" character in DC's pantheon. It doesn't matter that this new kid is supposed to be Ollie's son. He's just another goofy teen


If he's on your trail, not even death can save you.
STAR WARS
BOBA FETT
An action-packed one-shot by John Wagner and Cam Kennedy.
DARK HORSE COMICS
STAR WARS TAKING THE HOLIDAY BY FORCE
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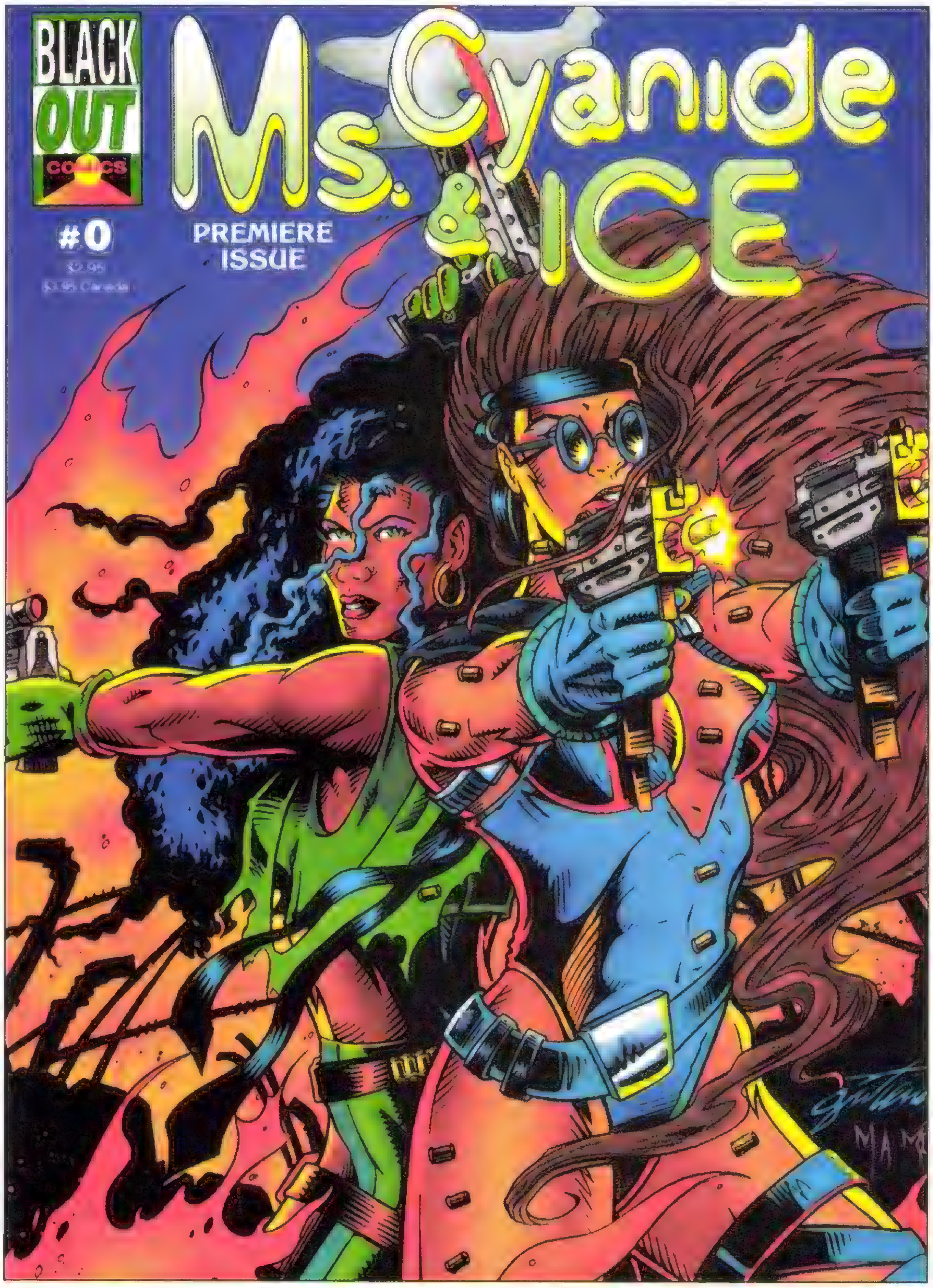
hero, lacking any of the intensity of his predecessor. As far as I'm concerned, Green Arrow is dead.
RATING: 3

MS. CYANIDE & ICE #0

Blackout
Written by John R. Platt, penciled by Bill Wylie, inked by various
Sometime in the future—the year 2014, to be exact—a massive conspiracy frees every convicted criminal in America. On the grimy streets of New York City, two women are fed up and just trying to stay alive. Then the word comes down...the federal government is officially sanctioning vigilantes (boy, if Charles Bronson were around for this!). Sure, *Ms. Cyanide & Ice* is a "bad girl" book, but that doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing. Blackout has scored here with a creative team that is far better than a publisher this small can usually put together. Both writer Platt and penciler Wylie are good at what they do. Better, in fact, than some of the more well-known creative minds putting books together for the big boys. It ain't brain surgery. It isn't even daring. But it's a fine example of standard comic book fare.
RATING: 7

PRIMORTALS: ORIGINS #1

Tekno Comix
Written by Leonard Nimoy and James Chambers, penciled by Scot Eaton, inked by Mike Barreiro
While the regular series suffers from


BLACK OUT COMICS
Ms. Cyanide & ICE
#0
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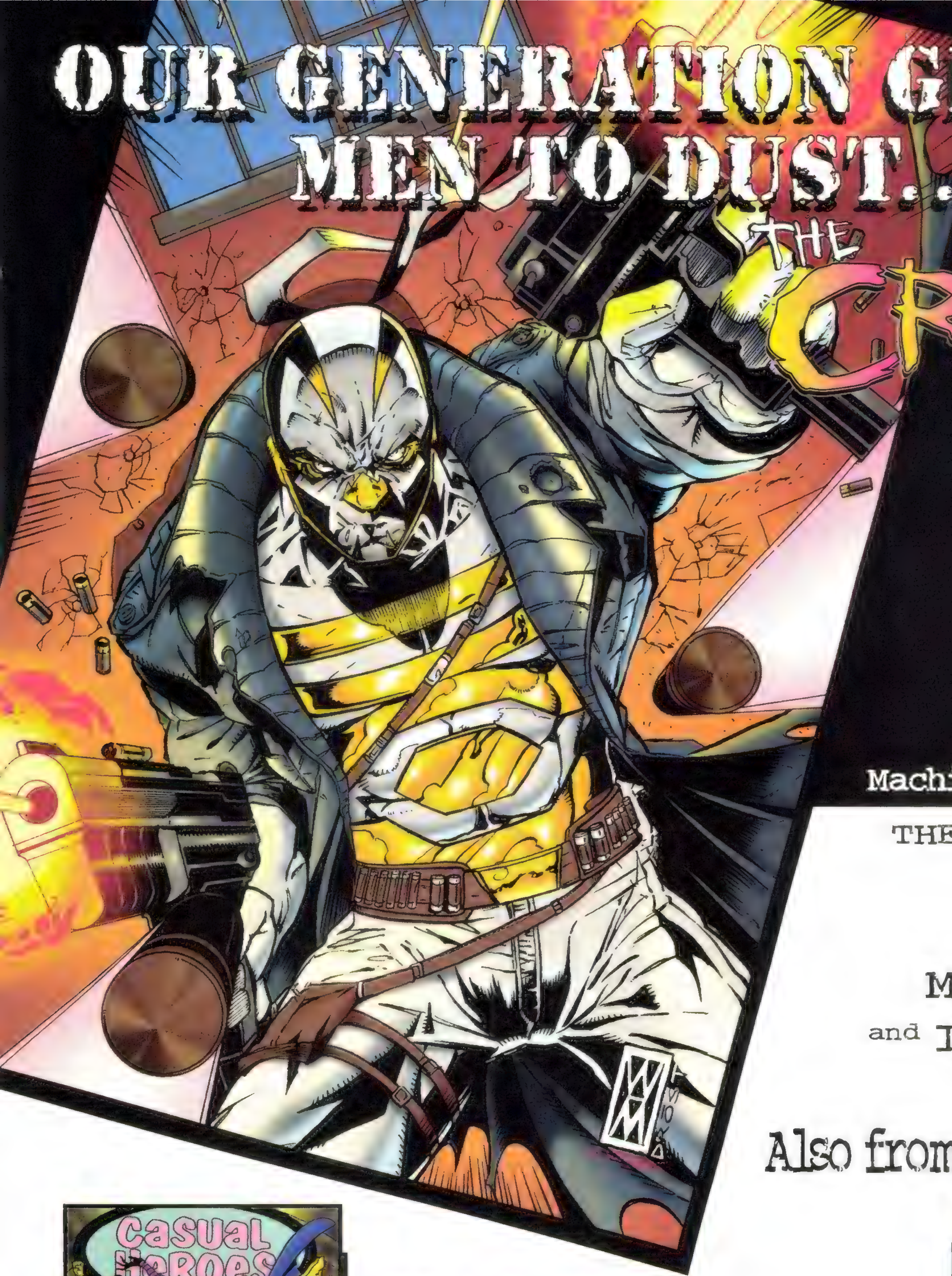
OUR GENERATION GRINDS MEN TO DUST...



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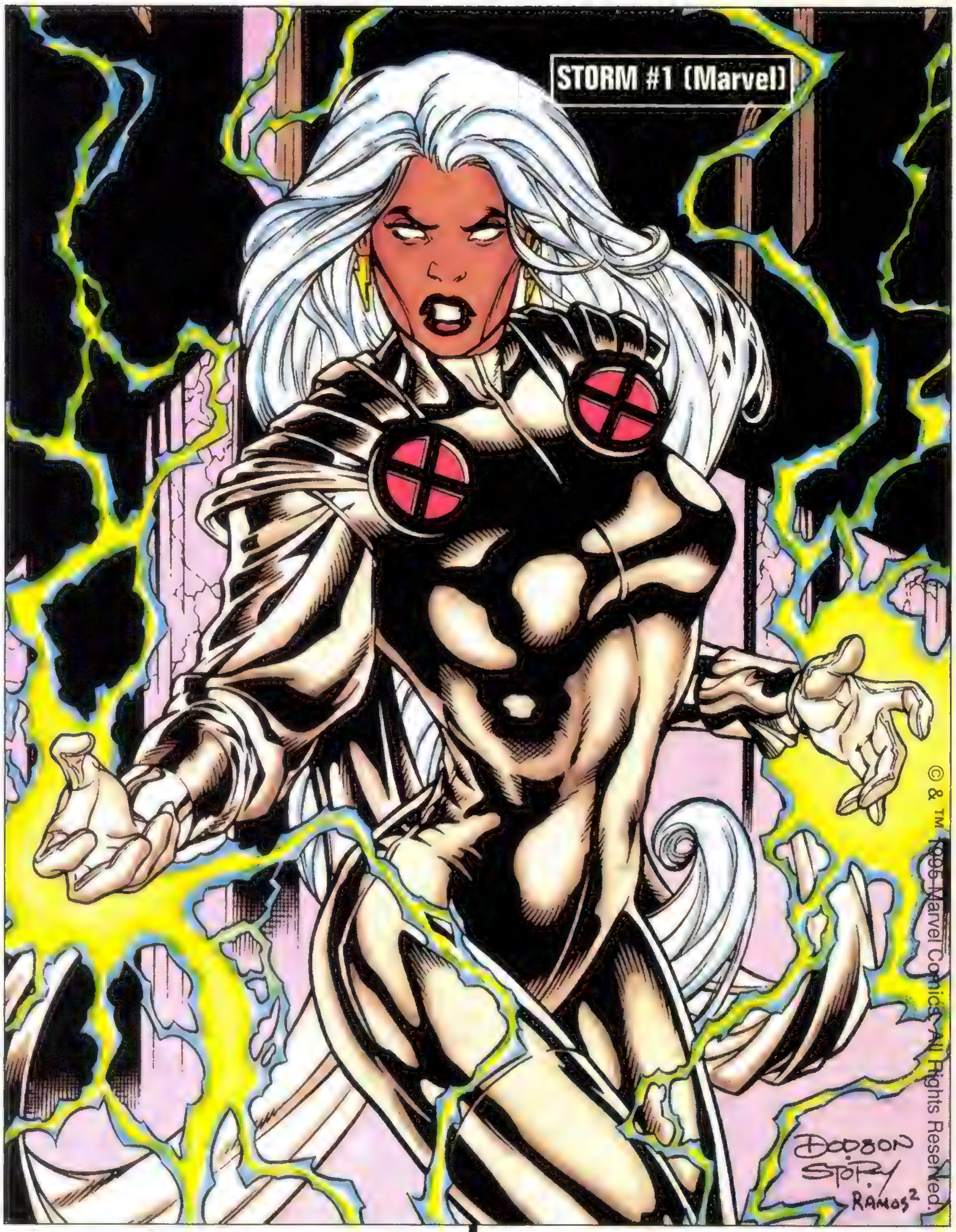
many of the same problems as *Xander*, it has been improving, and this miniseries seems to be off to a good start. The alien designs are very cool, particularly Prisar (the Rhino-dude) and the origins told herein finally explain, fairly reasonably, the backstory behind the whole series. It also advances the main storyline. If the book continues on this path, it may begin to fulfill the high expectations readers had when it was first announced.
RATING: 7

STORM #1

Marvel
Written by Warren Ellis, penciled by Terry Dodson, inked by Karl Story
An interesting character who has been allowed to take a back seat for the past few years, Storm gets the star treatment here. In light of recent events featuring Gene Nation, Ororo must come to terms with her responsibilities to the Morlocks she once abandoned. Ellis is an excellent writer, but more importantly, Marvel editors seem willing to let him tell stories his own way, offering readers a different take on superheroes. Many may be unfamiliar with Dodson, but not after this miniseries. His covers, in particular, are striking.
RATING: 8.5


STORM #1 (Marvel)

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TARZAN VS. PREDATOR AT THE EARTH'S CORE #1

Dark Horse
Written by Walter Simonson, illustrated by Lee Weeks
Tarzan, the Lord Greystoke, is called in to help a joint US/UK mission to investigate a UFO, at the same time that he receives a call from help from Pellucidar, the legendary prehistoric land at the center of the Earth. The Predators have invaded Pellucidar, and Tarzan and his team are their next targets. All of these Predator team-ups are getting a little tiresome, but this one has more than just a hero and a hunter stalking each other. There's grand adventure here, and streamlined art by Weeks.
RATING: 8.5

VAMPS: HOLLYWOOD & VEIN #1

DC/Vertigo
Written by Elaine Lee, illustrated by William Simpson
Those vampire biker babes are back, and LA will never be the same! The first *Vamps* miniseries was a lot of fun, and well executed, but by necessity it was a one note story, introducing the whole concept and background of these five fanged Thelmas and Louises. The second time around, there's far more going on, far more at...uhh...stake. Hollywood is making a movie about them, but has no idea the Vamps are real. And each of the girls has to deal with personal problems...vampire angst! Lee and Simpson have done it again.
RATING: 9

X-MEN: ASKANI'-SON #1

Marvel
Written by Lobdell & Loeb, illustrated by Gene Ha
I've finally figured it out. Marvel is doing *Star Wars*. This sequel to *The Adventures Of Cyclops & Phoenix* continues the story of Cable's youth in the future world between the reigns of Apocalypse and Stryfe. It also explains a number of things. In fact, it seems Marvel intends to continue to do these things until they answer all the questions we were left with after *Cable* #1. Lucky us! Though it does seem a bit like *Star Wars*, Apocalypse as the Emperor, Stryfe as Vader, Blaquesmith as Ben Kenobi, Cable as Luke, etc, etc, it is excellent work across the board.
RATING: 9.5

X-MEN: ASKANI'SON #1 (Marvel)

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Stax

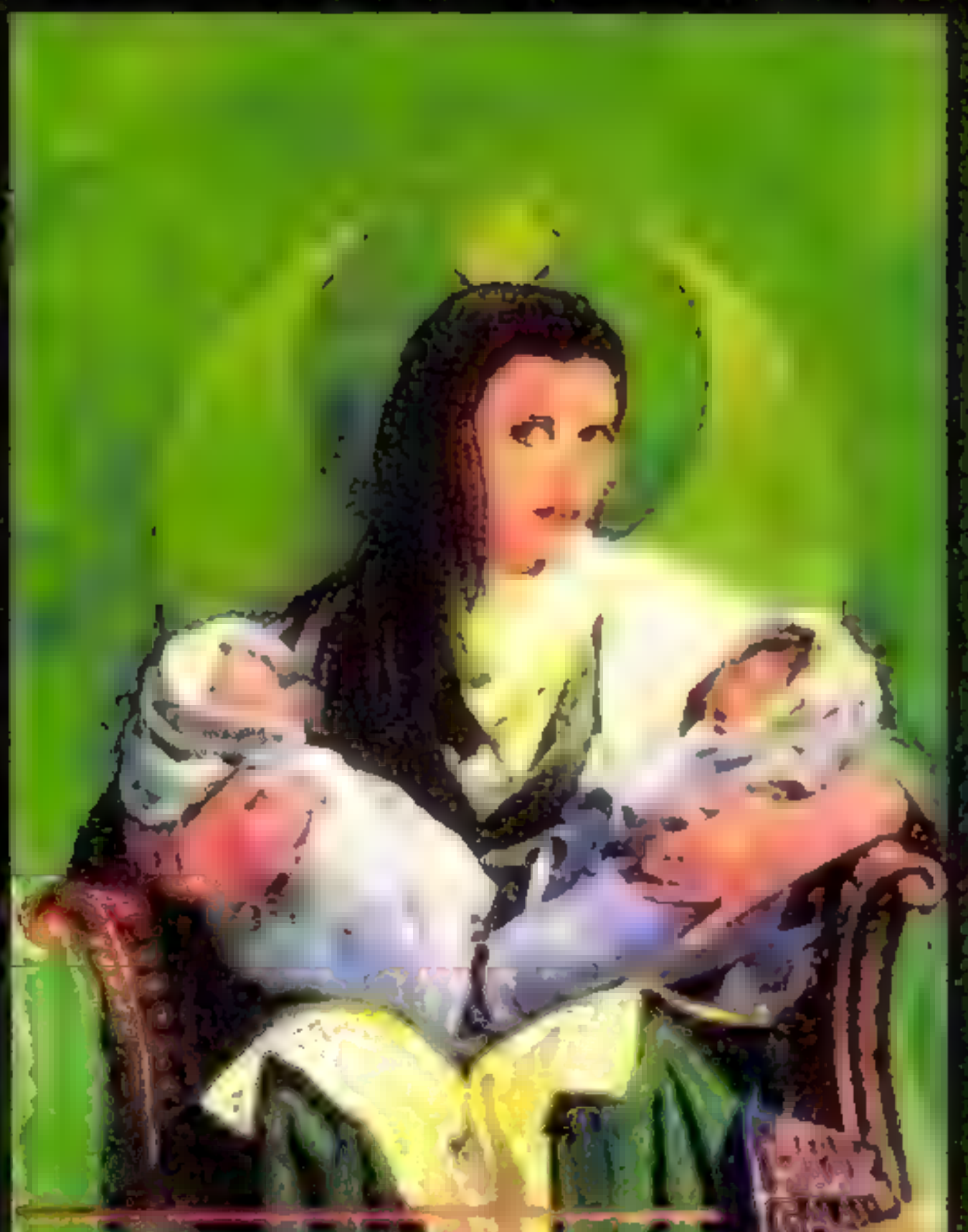
by Steve Fritz

•WildStorm's new *Conflict!* expansion set will add another 150-160 new cards to their collectible card game. Watch for new Plot Twist and Combat cards that are sure to add a whole new dimension to the game.

•The coolest, sexiest card game on the market these days is Daedalus' *Shadowfist*, and as you read this their first expansion set will be hitting the market. Called *Netherworlds*, game designer Robin Laws states the game will concentrate on the Jammers and Four Kings factions, which were only hinted at in the first set.

•Topps announced it will be doing not one, but two, new *Star Wars* card sets in the near future. The first set is called *Star Wars Master Visions*. The 36-card set is made up of extra large cards that measure 6.5" x 10" and are printed on 24 pt., foil-stamped stock. They'll feature art from past Topps sets including the works of Dave Dorman, the Hildebrandt Brothers and others. They will be sold at $1.50 per card and come in display boxes of all 36 cards.

The second set will be the third edition of Topps' *Star Wars Galaxy* set. *Galaxy 3* features a tribute to the 15th anniversary of the second *SW* film, *The Empire Strikes Back*. The total set is composed of 90-cards and will be sold in seven-card packs.



•Heartbreaker's third *DoomTrooper* expansion set is called *Mortificator* and, according to the game's creator, Big Bob Watts, this is where the game gets really vicious. Set against an interplanetary war, *Mortificator* brings in two new kinds of cards, Assassins and Poisons. (gee, guess what they do...) The cards continue the same awe-inspiring design that's become a hallmark of the *DoomTrooper* set.

•Comic Images will be doing a 90-card all-chromium set featuring new artwork from both Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell. Chase cards include more autographed cards, 7 different Magnachrome cards (in two different sets) and a six-card press sheet with art that isn't in the basic set.

the MANSON family

© Joseph Cultice

by Chris Hudak

FLUX and decadent rock icon Marilyn Manson have a sensitive talk about nostalgic toys, childhood fears and down-home Satanism

Marilyn Manson's gaunt frontmonster, "Mr. Manson," is scary. That's just about as straight as I can put it. Onstage—covered in skintight leather, smeared lipstick, blood from self-inflicted wounds, sweat and spit and God-only-knows what else from fans in the front rows—he glares like a sanitarium trustee and lurches like the entire east wing of the Primates Pavilion of any decent zoo, smashing the occasional bottle against his own skull for yucks. He's one of the last things you'd want to see in a dark alley—and a well-lit room just might be even worse.

A relatively unknown band until they were taken under the production wing of Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor, Marilyn Manson are now drawing fire from parents' groups who contend the band's lyrics and tone tread into very dangerous waters. Songs from their debut album, *Portrait Of An American Family*—a dark look at hypocrisy and the corruption of youth—with titles such as "Cake And Sodomy" (and the band's credo/societal warning which states, in part, "We are your shit. You should be ashamed of what you have eaten/this is your world in which we grow, and we will grow to hate you.") evoke uneasy images of a depraved Pied Piper, leading the children astray with promises of sweets. Marilyn Manson's new EP, *Smells Like Children*, continues in this vein. What infuriates "Mr. Manson's" opponents most is that this articulate, moody gargoyle cannot be dismissed as a brain-dead rocker. And whatta you know—Mr. Manson, this clown prince of corruption, even has a tender side, if you can call it that. Mr. Manson on the EP: "This is a different side of what I do, this EP. It is my more caring side in a strange way, and it's got a lot of different experiments in use and abuse. You'll know what I mean when you hear it."

Marilyn Manson, like many of us, likes toys, and cartoons, and...well, see for yourself.

Just don't take any candy from him.

FLUX: Much of Marilyn Manson's music deals with the relationship between innocence and corruption. Where does that come from?

MARILYN MANSON: The things that surround us in America have an incredible impact on children growing up. In some people's eyes, the way I've been brought up has made me a fucked-up person, or someone who doesn't belong in society. But I'm happy that I've turned out this way, so I don't regret any of the things I was exposed to as a kid. Even something as "simple" as good and evil—I think good is what you like, and evil is what you don't like, so no one can expect the entire world to have the same morality. I cross a lot of people's borders, and what I do is offensive to a lot of people. But it's not me trying to be offensive, it's me expressing my ideas and unfortunately—being a misanthrope, and living in my own space—a lot of people won't understand what I'm trying to do.

FLUX: Are you a misanthrope in the literal sense of the word? Do you hate your fellow man?

MANSON: I think I'm a misanthrope; I consider myself an equal-opportunity hater. I hate all people of all shapes and sizes, which would certainly make me differ greatly from, you know, say a Nazi. I'm much more of an individual and a selfish person. I don't think that I'm better than this group, or this group—I think I'm better than all groups. I've taken the time to realize that people are afraid to accept the burden of individuality, because it's not an easy thing to make up your own mind, to make your own choices. Are you straight, or do you support drugs? You know, I'll do drugs, but I think I'm responsible enough, where a lot of people aren't. It would all go back to Marilyn Manson...the name even means so much more to me than it did when I thought of it, because it really defines what I'm about. The things that I hate, I hate very strongly, and the things that I do love—I care about them more than anything else. The thing that I think is real weak about America is that, through things like Christianity, emotions become so watered-down that they don't have any importance. When you're told to love your neighbor and to love your enemy, what kind of value does love have? I guess I can't say that I'm a true misanthrope. I guess I do want to make things better, in some ways, but the other side of my personality wants me to be decadent—to ride the wave of destruction to Armageddon and not care what happens.

FLUX: What are some things people should be exposed to if they want to understand you?

MANSON: I would say Neitzche, for starters. I think he has a few good things to say here and there, if you know how to interpret him properly. Another one would be *Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory*—I think it has a lot of very powerful messages in it, if you look into it the way I do, and not everybody does. The chocolate, to me, is a metaphor for indulgence. When you're growing up, chocolate is something that's bad if you eat too much of it, and you always get it as a treat, so, to me it's a metaphor for indulgence, and you can stick anything in that—sex, violence, or any other crimes you might want to commit that you can dream up. Willy Wonka to me is that great tempter, the classic, Satanic, film-noir character who's tempting the kids and putting them through little tests and things. I've always like the deeper meanings behind it, and I picked a passage from that movie to open our album because it was appropriate for the Nineties. I've always been a big fan of Dr. Seuss for the same reasons. I think *The Cat In The Hat* falls into that same role of getting the kids to do things they're not supposed to do when their mom's not around—seeing that what everyone thinks is evil isn't so bad, you know? I may be your anti-Christ to America, but...is that so bad? Am I any different than you?

FLUX: I understand that you're an ordained 'priest' in the Church of Satan.

MANSON: I think anyone who's an artist, or a musician, or anyone who even likes to express themselves on any level, has the roots of Satanism in their ideals. Anton LeVey has always appreciated what we've done, and I've always, you know, paid credit to him as far as an inspiration. I wouldn't say that Marilyn Manson is a Satanic band in the Hollywood-Christian-America idea of what Satanism is...but in the true sense of what Satanism is, I would say Marilyn Manson is the most Satanic band. It has nothing to do with 'worshipping' anyone but yourself—it's realizing that Man is an animal, and that animal instinct is something that you should embrace, because it's something you're born with. All the seven deadly sins are emotions that make you human—you know, hatred and lust. These are things that make you what you are, and I think people should enjoy that, and not live in so much guilt—just live life to its fullest. So many people go through their whole lives never experiencing anything because they're too guilty and too afraid. They've got Jesus—just like Santa Claus—hanging over them. You know, if you're not good you're not gonna get anything for Christmas; you're gonna die and go to Hell. But by doing that, they're making their own Hell for themselves on Earth.

FLUX: Have you ever had any problems with the law?

MANSON: Well, I've gotten arrested twice in the past year, both times for indecent exposure on stage. You know, I get hassled just like anybody else who doesn't look like they're working a nine-to-five job. I'm sure everyone can relate to that, so I don't have any martyr stories about being abused by the police. I'm just constantly experimenting with everything: With how what I do makes other people react, and why they react that way, and how things other people do make me react, and how things I do to myself make me react. I've spent the last ten days in Florida, pretty much locked in my old bedroom at my parents' house, trying to put myself though some kind of self-therapy or rehabilitation, because I'd spent the previous two weeks just in complete decadence and indulging in everything I could find in New Orleans—drugs, alcohol, pornography, and anything I could find, just to see what kind of reaction I would get out of it.

FLUX: I've heard stories of Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson riding around in the tour bus, playing DeathMatches of *DOOM* between shows. Do you read comics and play games?

MANSON: The only old comic that I really enjoy is *Creepy*. I just think that when I get old, I'm gonna look like Uncle Creepy anyway, so I'm getting used to it now. I collect a lot of old toys...that's my favorite things. Like KISS dolls, *Charlie's Angels* dolls, *The Six Million Dollar Man*. I loved video games growing up, but now I think my attention span has suffered so much that I can't find any game that can hold my attention for long enough. But I do still love pinball machines for some reason, and I do love Atari 2600 games like *Asteroids* and the classic *Space Invaders* and *Pong* and stuff like that. To be honest, I love the old, shitty cartridges that you had to stick in. I think that was part of the fun. To me, these are my own little forms of time-travel, using nostalgia and things like that—playing an old game like that will make me feel a certain point in my life when I was growing up; it will remind me of a specific time, or smell—it will trigger some sort of memory. I really thrive on a lot of those things. When you really do figure out how the power of your mind relates to nature and to technology, like computers, that's when you really tap into powerful things that people can't put a name on; you can't call it magic, you can't call it science, it's just something unexplainable. But when you really figure out how to manipulate that, I think that's powerful. Hey, do they make a Ouija board you can use on the computer?

SPECTACULAR DC VS. MARVEL

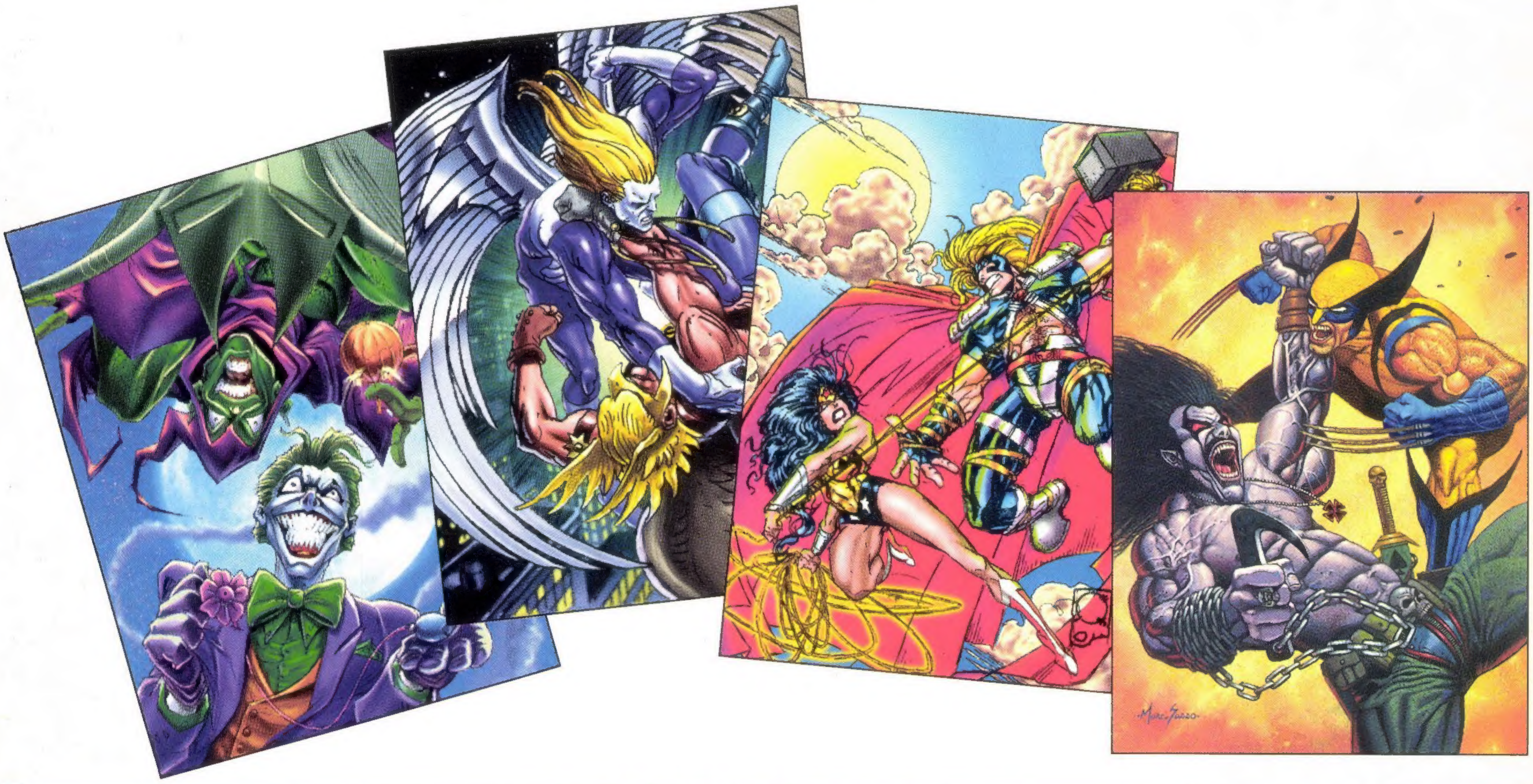
FLEER/SKYBOX CARD SET GIVEAWAY!!

As comic fans read about the battle of the century in the DC VERSUS MARVEL/MARVEL VERSUS DC miniseries, Fleer/SkyBox International is prepared to give away boxes of their spectacular card sets based on the super-hot series.

Three awesome chase card sets complete the set. 18 embossed Impact cards feature the magnificent art of Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell to form two nine-block scenes that illustrate the battles between the Avengers and the Justice League Of America, and the Titans versus the X-Men. 12 HoloFX cards feature a clear holographic foil that renders a hologram effect of the color art. There are also 2 lenticular Mirage cards that each feature three images.

The 100-card basic set includes 12 Marvel hero cards, 12 DC hero cards, 10 Marvel villain cards, 10 DC villain cards, 11 Rivalry cards, 16 Hero vs. Hero cards, 13 Hero vs. Villain cards, 15 Villain vs. Villain cards and 1 checklist. Card backs are narrated by Clark Kent (Superman) and Peter Parker (Spider-Man), with Kent commenting on the Marvel characters and Parker commenting on the DC characters.

More than 50 different artists, including Andy and Adam Kubert, Julie Bell, Boris Vallejo, Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, John Byrne, Jim Balent and Dave Dorman, contributed top-notch artwork for the card set.



FIRST PRIZE (5)

Five first prize winners will each receive an uncut sheet of the complete DC Versus Marvel card set.

SECOND PRIZE (25)

25 second prize winners will each receive a complete box of DC Versus Marvel cards.

DETACH AND SEND TO: FLUX, 1115 Broadway, 8th Fl., New York, NY 10010 ATTN: Fleer Giveaway

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY **STATE** **ZIP**

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Entries must be received no later than March 15, 1996. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by phone. The prize will be shipped as soon as possible. All employees of FLUX, Harris Publications, Fleer/SkyBox International, Marvel Comics and DC Comics are not eligible. Winners are ineligible to enter future sweepstakes in FLUX. The drawing will be held on March 25, 1996; all entries must be received by then. Only 1 entry per person.

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Destruction derby

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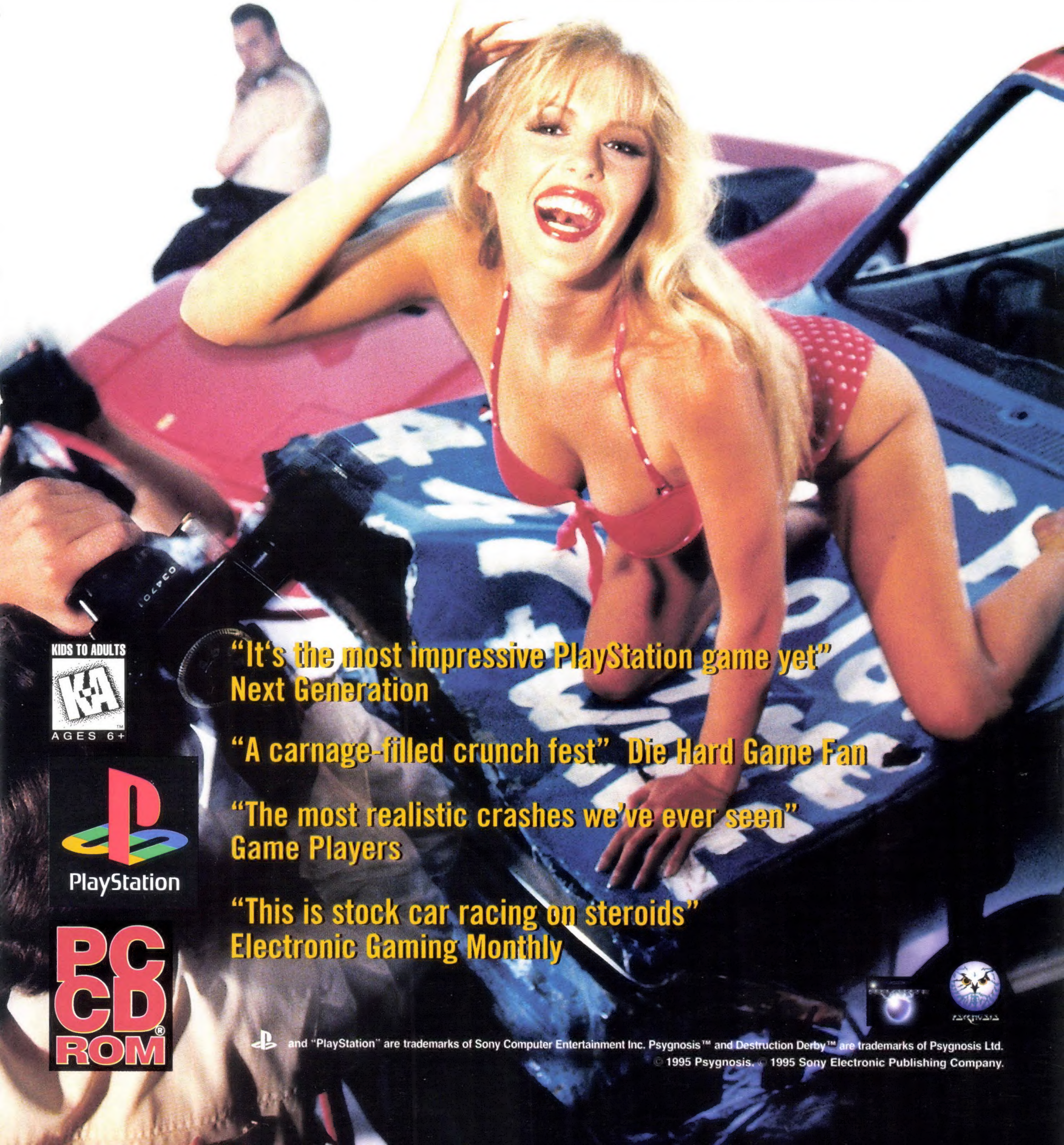

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K-A
AGES 6+

PlayStation

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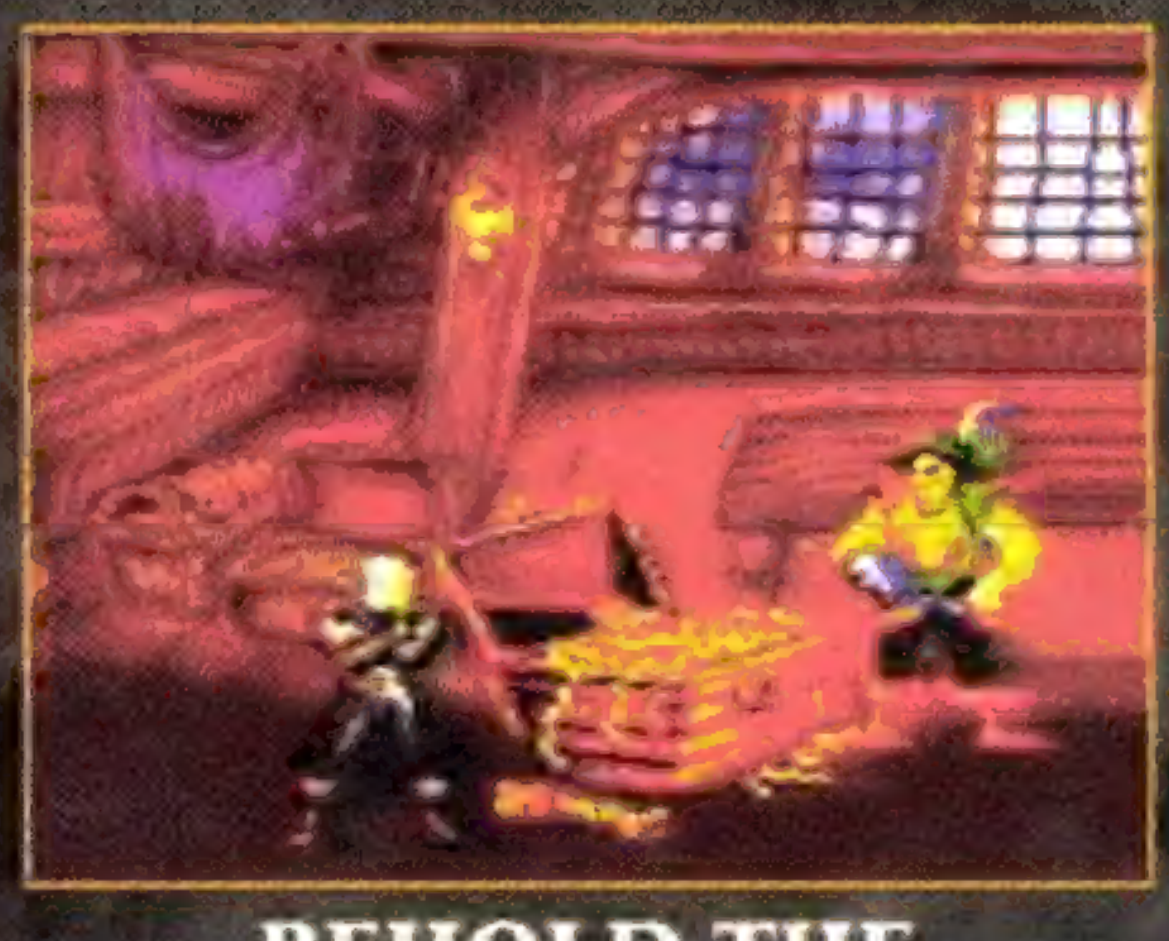

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